# THE GERMAN ARMY FROM WITHIN

BY A BRITISH OFFICER
WHO HAS SERVED IN IT

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# THE GERMAN ARMY FROM WITHIN

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## BY A BRITISH OFFICER WHO HAS SERVED IN IT

"The leaders must be definitely educated for that war on the great scale which some day will have to be fought to a finish. The paths we have hitherto followed do not lead to that goal."—FRIEDRICH VON BERNHARDI.

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## INTRODUCTORY

WHEN, during the Boxer Campaign in China, the Kaiser sent to his troops at the front the message which has lately put a girdle round about the globe—"Make for yourselves reputations like the Huns of Attila!"—he was not merely sending them a watchword for that campaign: he was expressing the spirit that animates to-day the Army of Germany. Put into other words, it is: "Win! Honestly, if you can, but . . . WIN!"

For the German Army has been builded with one aim: a world-war. In that war they must be victorious, or . . . "Our next war," said the cynical Bernhardi, writing in 1911, "will be fought for the highest interests of our country and of mankind. *World-power or Downfall!* must be our rallying-cry."

Some years ago, in a book published under my own name, I pointed out the direction that that war must take. Teuton and Slav have for some time past been pressing slowly southward, as rivals,

each keenly conscious of the other's aims. The movement was scarcely realised by the States of Western Europe, notably Great Britain, though its tendency was clearly defined, and, on the Teuton side, it received an impetus from a people who were half Slav, namely, the Prussians. It was the more slow, perhaps, because racial impulse has been curbed by the subtle arts of diplomacy, by the science of strategy, and by a keen realisation of economic necessities. Each of these three factors has its victories to record, acts which, to most people, seemed but loose links in the chain of history, rather than firm steps towards the goal, distant but clearly seen by those who led the movement. The science of strategy brought Schleswig-Holstein into the German Union, welded the German States together, and extended their line of outposts to the Vosges mountains. Diplomacy, following victory in the field, made of the German States an Empire, reconciled Austria, and forced Italy into the triple alliance. Diplomacy again brought Heligoland as an outpost in the sea to Germany, and political economy endeavoured to bring Holland into the German Zollverein. Thus the right flank of the Teuton movement from the Baltic to the Balkans was fully secured. Neither was the left flank neglected. Wedged in between the Balkan kingdoms and Russia

was Roumania. A Hohenzollern was placed on its throne, and all who know Roumania will realise that Austria is paramount there. In both Servia and Bulgaria *la haute finance* was in Austrian hands, and German commercial enterprise was extending into Asia Minor.

When the Teuton nations moved, so many centuries ago, a world-wide Empire fell in ruins, an Empire glutted with wealth, yet teeming with a pauper population in its capital, luxurious, enervated, disdaining any service to its country, unconscious of any obligations in return for the privilege of citizenship. So Rome fell before the Teuton, before the pressure of a *Völkerwanderung*. Now again the Teuton is moving.

Certainly, war was inevitable. Germany had suffered too long from lack of colonies. The rapidly increasing industrial population had demanded insistently some new outlet for its energies and some more productive fields of labour. Scattered in every country of the world were the best German intellect and labour—engineers, scientists, surveyors, and so forth—working for the peoples of other countries because their own offered no scope and possessed no colonies where fresh opportunity might be found. Expansion became imperative. But a reason had to be given, for, as Bismarck had told his country:

"Even victorious wars can only be justified when they are forced upon a nation, and we cannot see the cards held by Providence so closely as to anticipate the historical development by personal calculation."

The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his Consort provided a cause, and the act of one fanatic gave the impetus to the avalanche which descended upon Europe; justified the rapine and pillage of the little peoples. Germany, putting her whole trust in her military organisation, challenged the world to mortal combat.

The hands and brains of the greatest in the Empire had long been given to the laborious perfecting of that imposing machine. It seemed to be polished to the last inch. The moment clearly was ordained by Providence; so, the button was pressed and the mighty levers were started.

This is not the time for drawing conclusions. The fortunes of war are proverbially uncertain, and the sagest prophet would hesitate before predicting that World-power or Downfall will be the ultimate destiny of the Teuton. *All I propose to do in this book is to take the machine to pieces for you, and show you how it works.* Magnificent as the machine is—and it is ten times nearer perfection than that which faced France in the 'seventies—it must be remembered that the France that fights to-day is

not the effete nation that it then was. By all the laws of theory Germany is bound to conquer; but Theory is a poor military leader, and woe to those who place reliance on a semblance of power or an under-estimation of the opposing forces.

By the time these pages can appear in print, the Army will probably have been brought under the microscope of the world. Until to-day it has been universally recognised as the most marvellous machine ever constructed by the mind and the sinew of man. The Kaiser has given his whole personal energy and the blood and youth of the nation to the building of this machine. Naturally, by such tremendous effort he has achieved his aim. If you give your whole body and soul to "getting on," of course you do get on, but at the expense of every one of the finer qualities of humanity. It is just these finer individual qualities, or the lack of them, that make a nation great or mean, enduring or ephemeral. And . . . a machine is only as strong as its weakest part. . . .

In regard to military matters the German axiom seems to be that the greatness of an army lies with its directors. The British axiom is that the greatness of an army lies with its men. I speak with knowledge of both English and German soldiers—privates, non-coms., and officers of rank—and I

am firmly convinced that one British Tommy is the equal of three Germans of the same rank. Certain proof of this has already been shown by the lack of initiative on the part of the German rank and file and the extraordinary absence of control on the part of the officers. In the attack on Liège, again and again the German lines wavered and broke, and were driven on to destruction by the swords of their superiors. And again, in the Heligoland action, when every chance was gone, and the boat was settling down, the men made for the water, and were fired upon by their officers.

These are only two of many examples. Obviously, if things of this sort are going on, there is something wildly wrong with the system of training, with the officers, and with the general *morale* of the service. One important defect is that no chance is given to the men to display initiative. The German character is at no time quick in this direction, and the little that a man may possess when he enters the Army is studiously squeezed out of him. On no account may he act and think for himself. He is simply there to do as he is told; whether he understands the motive of this or that operation is of no consequence. If his officers are shot down, and there is none to tell him what to

do, or when to do it, or how, the result is dismay and confusion.

Yet, only five years ago, Bernhardi was insisting, without result, on the urgent necessity for increased individualisation. "Wherever," he says, "we turn our eyes to the wide sphere of modern warfare, we encounter the necessity for independent action—by the private soldier in the thick of the battle, or the lonely patrol in the midst of the enemy's country, as much as by the leader of an army who handles huge hosts. In battle, as well as in operations, the requisite uniformity of action can only be attained at the present time by independent co-operation of all in accordance with the fixed general scheme." But undue importance is still attached to the march past as a method of education, and drilling in close formation is still practised. The cavalry still perform the same traditional exercises on the parade grounds, exercises which are of no practical value and which inflict a severe strain on the strength of the horses engaged. The artillery, too, is much given to stale technicalities, circus tricks, and so on, and to adherence to conservative notions of artillery operations; and, though the War Cabinet has again and again been urged by its critics not to continue to restrict the independence of the

subordinate for the sake of making a pretty show, the old methods are still in practice.

Only three years ago the military expert of "The Times" was expressing the opinion that the German Army appeared to him to be living on a glorious past and to be unequal to the repute in which it is commonly held.

> "There is," he says, "insufficient test of the initiative of commanders of any units, large or small. There is nothing in the higher leading at manœuvres of a distinguished character, and mistakes are committed which tend to shake the confidence of foreign spectators in the reputation of the command.
>
> "The Infantry lacked dash, displayed no knowledge of the use of ground, intrenched themselves badly, were extremely slow in their movements, offered vulnerable targets at medium ranges, ignored the service of security, performed the approach marches in old-time manner, were not trained to understand the connection between fire and movement, and seemed totally unaware of the effect of modern fire. The Cavalry drilled well and showed some beautifully trained horses, while the Cavalry of the Guard was well handled from the Army point of view; but the arm was in

many ways exceedingly old-fashioned, the scouting was bad, and mistakes were made of which our Yeomanry would be ashamed. The Artillery, with its out-of-date *matériel* and slow and ineffective methods of fire, appeared so inferior that it can have no pretensions to measure itself against the French on anything approaching level terms. Finally, the dirigibles and aeroplanes presented the fourth arm in a relatively unfavourable light."

He goes on to say that the German Army, apart from its numbers, confidence in itself, and high state of organisation, does not present any signs of superiority over the best foreign models, and in some ways hardly rises above the level of the second-rate. He, too, shares my opinion that it has trained itself stale, and makes the suggestion which has been made by many others, a suggestion with which I entirely agree, namely, that the only way in which to re-vitalise the Army would be to disband it for a year in order to give everyone in it, from the highest to the lowest, a much-needed rest. Every hour of every day in every year the men are doing the same thing with ceaseless concentration, and officers who have to wait perhaps fifteen years for a company are worn-out long before their

chance comes. He says, also, what I have said in another chapter, that the military spirit of the country is slowly but surely evaporating, and to-day the consuming passion is all the time for shekels.

So the wheels of the great machine have been turning and turning, revolving experimentally, at full force, but grinding nothing, with the result, now that something is ready to be ground, that the wheels have become weary by their ceaseless revolutions.

The Army to-day is constituted as follows: The Kaiser is General-in-Chief, and under him—shall I say very much under him?—is an Imperial Staff and a War Cabinet. There is a War Minister, appointed by His Majesty, but he is responsible to no one but his Emperor, and, though he sits in the Reichstag, whatever criticism may there be levelled at him, is of little moment. They still debate and debate in the Reichstag about war contributions, even as in Regensburg, but the practical effect is small. Supreme command is vested in the Kaiser, who may mobilise or dislocate the troops as he thinks fit, who may declare war or peace, and appoint, as he pleases, officers of the Army and personally receive their oath.

Every able-bodied male of the Empire is liable

for military service for a period of one, two, or three years. If he can pass the one-year volunteer exam. he serves only one year; otherwise he serves two years with the infantry or artillery or three with cavalry or horse artillery.

The command of the Army proper is nominally in the hands of Prince Albert of Prussia. There is a surveying and map-making staff, whose duty it is to collect topographical information concerning the countries with whom war is a possibility; there is a superintendent of military marching; there is an Inspector-General of Fortresses; and there is an Inspector-General for the 1st, 2nd, 9th, 10th, and 17th Army Corps, which centres in Berlin; other inspectors for Army Corps have centres in the States of Saxony, Hanover, Bavaria, and Carlsruhe.

There is also a Railway Staff. Most of the railways of the Empire are State-governed, and a carefully trained staff superintends railway mobilisation. All mobilisation plans are modified every year, in order to ensure secrecy, and only the adjutants and colonels of regiments know anything of the plans of this staff.

The system is divided into nineteen Army Corps, situated as follows:—

| *Corps.* | *District.* | *Headquarters* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | East Prussia | Königsberg |
| 2 | Pomerania | Stettin |
| 3 | Brandeburg | Berlin |
| 4 | Saxony | Magdeburg |
| 5 | Posen and Liegnitz | Posen |
| 6 | Breslau and Oppeln | Breslau |
| 7 | Westphalia | Münster |
| 8 | Prussia, Prussian Rhineland | Coblenz |
| 9 | Schleswig-Holstein | Altona |
| 10 | Hanover | Hanover |
| 11 | Cassel | Cassel |
| 12 | Bautzen | Dresden |
| 13 | Würtemberg | Stuttgart |
| 14 | Baden and Upper Alsace | Carlsruhe |
| 15 | Lower Alsace | Strasburg |
| 16 | Lorraine | Metz |
| 17 | Western Prussia | Dantzig |
| 18 | Wiesbaden and Hesse | Frankfort |
| 19 | Chemnitz | Dresden |

The Bavarian Army is quite distinct, consisting of three Army Corps, with headquarters at Nürnberg, Würtzburg, and Munich. Commandants of the German Army are stationed, so far as the more important are concerned, at the following towns: Altona, Berlin, Bitsch, Boyen, Breslau, Carlsruhe,

Coblenz, Cologne, Cuxhaven, Dantzig, Darmstadt, Dresden, Frankfort, Friedrichsort, Geestemunde, Germersheim, Glatz, Glogau, Graudenz, Heligoland, Ingolstadt, Kiel, Küstrin, Königsberg, Magdeburg, Mayence, Metz, Munich, Neuf-Brisac, Pillau, Posen, Potsdam, Schwerin, Spandau, Strasburg, Stuttgart, Sweinemunde, Thionville, Thorn, Ulm, Wesel, and Wilhelmshaven.

Of the more important fortresses, Mainz is regarded by those who know as the most strategic point in the West of Europe. Situated on the eastern point of the Rhine, which it dominates, it commands also the natural way to the Danube, and the routes leading to the Elbe valley, to Cassel and to the Black Forest.

Next comes Königsberg on the Baltic, guarded, on its eastern side, by the Dieme Canal. Between Königsberg and the Russian frontier is a striking natural defence in the shape of fifty miles of marshland. This is an advantage enjoyed by two or three others—namely, Posen, Küstrin, and Stolpemünde.

Metz, the greatest stronghold in Alsace-Lorraine, is protected by eleven forts, and, in peace times, it is the centre of the German Army, and holds thirty-three infantry battalions, ten squadrons of cavalry, and twenty-seven batteries of artillery. Its sister-fortress, Strasburg, designed by Moltke, was

considered by him to be impregnable. It is protected by fifteen forts, connected by citadel railways, and from it armies can manœuvre east or west of the Rhine without intervention.

In the matter of military aircraft Germany is severely behind France. She possesses only nineteen classifications, rigid and non-rigid, the principal headquarters being Hamburg, Dresden, Leipzig, Königsberg, Metz, Cologne, Friedrichshaven, Trêves, Posen, and Potsdam.

At Thorn, Wahn, Artcherz, and Jüterbock are the testing stations for shooting; and in addition to the various Inspectors and Staffs already detailed, the War Office devotes special departments to the organisation of cavalry, to the pitching of camps, to foot-marching, to light cavalry, heavy cavalry, defence of fortresses, and general engineering, and —grim touch—to the equipment of a special corps of undertakers which follows the Army in the field.

The standard of stature and general physique of the men is slightly lower than that obtaining in England. Since the enormous industrial expansion of the last few years there has been a still further deterioration, but the men are nevertheless well-set and sturdy, though not perhaps at any time the equal, in grit and endurance, of the Russian. To the English mind the military training and disci-

pline, of which I shall speak in a later chapter, will probably seem of a terribly harsh character, but it is not really so harsh to those who are all their lives accustomed to discipline and command, even in the matter of crossing the public street.

In the matter of armaments they carry the ordinary Mauser, steel-tube lances, and straight swords. The cuirassiers carry a distinctive sword, exclusive to themselves, called a pallasch, rather broader and longer than that used by the cavalry. (An interesting point about those amazing siege guns, of which we have heard so much, and which came into operation at Namur, is that no soldier in the German Army understands them or knows how to manipulate them. They are manned by men sent specially from Krupp's.) In equipment the German soldier mostly travels heavy, carrying, roughly, from ninety pounds to a hundredweight when on the march.

The peace footing of the Army, as ordered last year, is 670,000 privates, 110,000 non-coms., and 38,000 officers, with, roughly, another 20,000 one-year volunteers. Behind this peace Army is the reserve, formed of those who have served their required time with the colours. The infantry must serve five years and the mounted forces four years in this line. They are called up once a year for

exercise, and their service is about sixty days per year.

Behind these, again, is the Landwehr, the second-line reserve, which demands another five years, and, in the background, the Landsturm, consisting of men whose ages range from thirty-five to forty-five. This last line is not called upon for actual service, but they are compelled to answer periodic roll-calls.[1]

In the matter of pay Germany is deplorably behind Great Britain in proper recognition of her defenders. A lieutenant receives £60 per annum, rising, after a number of years, to £85, and, later still, to £120. A captain receives from £180 to £250, and so on, in proportion. Thus it will be seen that the prospects of the young man who has to make his way are none too bright, though certainly the expenses of life in a big garrison are not so heavy as in the British Army. Roughly speaking, the young German who enters the service professionally will require about £1000 to launch himself with anything like satisfactory results.

All this, however, is mere dry statistics. I hope, in the pages that follow, to put life into these facts and to show you the vast organisation at work and play, peeping into the daily life of the men with

[1] At the moment of writing they have, however, been called up, and are now in the field.

whom we are now engaged in a death-struggle. Since I am again fighting, or about to fight, for the country of my birth, I can set down clearly and dispassionately the life of the German Tommy Atkins on the drill-ground and barrack-squares and in the mess-rooms and barrack-rooms, *as I know it.* I was an infinitesimally small cog-wheel in the mechanism of the mightiest machine of destruction that the world has yet produced, and it is of my personal experience alone that I write. I conceal nothing. I exaggerate nothing.

## IN THE CADET COLLEGE

FROM the official reports of atrocities committed by my late comrades-in-arms in Belgian towns and villages, one might draw the conclusion that the German soldier, officer and man, is badly afflicted with the Sadic temperament. This, however, would be unjust. I think a truer explanation is that the common sensibilities of the German, the peasant and the cultivated man, are blunter than those of any other civilised race, and what is horror to us is mere horseplay to him.

It must be admitted, however, that there are, in every line of the German Army, numbers of men who would seem to be disciples of that Marquis who made a philosophy of luxurious cruelty. The cadet and the common soldier make early acquaintance with this systematised brutality; for the cadets enter the college at about twelve years of age, and the able-bodied citizen enters the ranks at twenty-one. Some official notice was taken of these methods of barbarism after the Army scandals of 1907, when, as will be remembered, the disclosures made

by Maximilien Harden led to wholesale clearances of highly placed officers and non-coms. from the Army and the Crown Prince's entourage.

One reason offered for this system is that the young soldier must be imbued with manliness; the Army is maintained and trained solely with the idea of ruthless warfare. Rob! Burn! Kill! are its mottoes, and the treatment meted out to the luckless youngster has the aim of impelling him to go and do likewise. I remember, at the time of the Boer War, experiencing surprise and regret at the extraordinary courtliness of the English towards the Boers. This was against all the precepts of the Kaiser's legions, and I continued to feel surprised and to anticipate trouble for England, until I saw what splendid results had been achieved by this leniency.

As a boy, I was educated partly in England and partly in Germany; and, when twelve years old, as I was in immediate need of the sharpest discipline, I was placed in a German military college. I had my first taste of their quality before I had actually arrived, for I was met at the gates of the barracks by one of the senior cadets, who roughly demanded my name. I introduced myself with as respectful a bow as I could accomplish, whereupon, without any display of feeling, but rather as one

who does what he considers to be his duty, he struck me across the face with a dog-chain. This was not because I was English, but because I was a newcomer ready to be broken in.

The corporal of my room was one of those characterless men, very common in the Prussian service, who can only maintain discipline by force. He was, I think, the most finished bully I have ever met, and must have spent hours of his days in devising new forms of punishment. One of his favourite pastimes was to order a recruit to hold three large German dictionaries under each arm, then stand on tip-toe, bend his knees, and remain for ten or fifteen minutes in this position. When he fell he was kicked or thrashed with a foil. I may say that on the first occasion when this happened to me I dropped the dictionaries, arose, and flew at the great man's throat. The subsequent penalties which I suffered were severe, but the tormentor treated me more leniently during the rest of my stay.

The other corporals were equally ruthless. Great stress was laid, in this particular college, on gymnastics, and though we were all very keen, we were sometimes not keen enough for our instructors, and our efforts were assisted in the right Prussian way. One afternoon the sergeant-major had me at his mercy, for I was hanging by both hands from

a very high horizontal bar, and could not swing up in a sufficiently agile manner. Whereupon he prodded me sharply from behind with the point of his sword, and in the moment of shock I swung back and alighted heavily on his chest. This did not gain me his favour, and the number of extra drills and gyms. which I suffered ought to have made me an all-round soldier and athlete.

It was the etiquette always to stand at attention when being addressed by a corporal or senior cadet. If you wished to visit a friend in another room, it was necessary to march to the open door, knock upon it, and ask the corporal in charge of that room if you might enter. If he liked the look of you, he would permit you to enter, but if he did not, or if you were in disfavour, or he were in a bad temper, he would either push you in the face or kick you. You then stood amiably to attention, and departed.

The food was neither of good quality nor sufficient in quantity, and as we were forced to work extremely hard, we felt the pinch. However, those of us who had little allowances from home were able to purchase small supplies in the town, of course in contravention of the regulations. As a rule, we would form a syndicate of three or four and lay in a stock of curaçao, ham, sardines, and so on, which

we would deposit in boxes and bury in the grounds of an adjacent park, meeting there at fixed times in order to gorge.

Réveillé was sounded throughout the passages at six o'clock, and our first duty, after toilet, was to clean our kit, buttons, swords, boots, etc., the juniors having to "fag" for the seniors. At seven o'clock each corporal marched his squad to the dining-room for a breakfast of very weak coffee and black bread. Then came an hour's preparation, followed by classes of instruction in all manner of subjects. At half-past ten came a break, with a sandwich, and then more study until noon. The midday hour was set aside for drill, and at one o'clock we marched again to dinner—meat, vegetables, and black bread . . . and very little of that.

The afternoon was devoted to fencing, gymnastics, swimming, and dancing; and at five o'clock came a little coffee and bread, and after that an hour's preparation. At eight o'clock, supper of bread and cheese, and, twice a week, a very thin beer—light lager, I imagine, heavily diluted with water. Every Saturday we were given the meal of the week which perhaps filled up the crevices left by the lack of nourishment on other days. This was a feast of dumplings, of which we were allowed to eat as many as we chose. They were good, stodgy

fare, and we took every advantage of the table, until several cases of sickness occurred. Then came revelations. One small boy who became violently ill was asked if he had eaten anything to disagree with him.

Innocently he answered, "No; only thirteen dumplings!" That small boy is now dead in Belgium. He was Prince William von Lippe.

On that occasion I had myself disposed of nine, but I attribute my escape from illness to the fact that I had a tremendous fight directly after supper with an objectionable senior, who had been making my life a misery. Discipline in matters of this kind was very strict, but at the moment of the crowning affront I forgot discipline, and, feeling full of vim, hit him violently on the nose. He squared up, and went through the windmill actions of the German boy trying to fight with his fists. Practically he was asking for the best punch I could give him; so I sent it to his address, where it arrived safely. As he went down, dozens of his set arrived on the scene, and I was marched off under escort. The result looked like being distinctly unpleasant for me, since, under the laws of etiquette, the class to which this cadet belonged had the privilege of haling me before the august presence and collectively thrashing me. However, the situation was saved by my cor-

poral, who, for once, proved himself a sport. He offered, singly, to thrash the whole of the opposing class, one by one or all at once. There was no match.

Owing to the scarcity of food in dining-hall, a certain traffic was carried on surreptitiously, but one had to be very smart indeed to elude the vigilance of the officer on duty. Those who had private supplies of food in the park had sometimes gorged themselves to repletion, and were not wanting the uninteresting fare of the college. But the difficulty was to pass it to the needy, for, if the corporal spotted it, it went no further than his own plate.

Many of my fellow-cadets were extremely weak in English or French, and when papers were given in these subjects, they invariably came to me. By this "ghosting" I was able to make quite a good thing in the shape of hard-boiled eggs or meat rissoles. My corporal's English exercises I was privileged to write for no reward whatever, except an occasional hammering. Cribbing, I may add, in this and all other German colleges was (and still is) carried to a high art, and very few could send in an exam. paper which was entirely their own work.

Once a week we received religious instruction. I, as an English boy, was classed as a Protestant.

The pastor himself was one of the most poisonous individuals I ever met. The class was so arranged that those most proficient sat at the back, the front benches being occupied by those who were short-sighted or in need of careful control. Although I was mostly second or third in my class, so far as ability went, I invariably had a front seat. For this pastor, and, indeed, for all civilian professors, we had nothing but the most profound contempt, and we displayed all the ingenuity of the budding German warrior for devising means of making him uncomfortable. This particular gentleman had, I knew, a horror of cold steel, and on one occasion, when I was called upon to recite the books of the Old Testament, I broke down completely, after making several sporting shots. This aroused in him the utmost wrath. He denounced me as a perfidious heathen, and heaped other courtesy titles upon me. When he had finished I resumed my seat, opened my clasp-knife, and stuck it sharply in the desk in front of me, so that I might, as I explained when challenged, spear on it any inconvenient questions that might come my way. This brought me considerable popularity . . . also several days' arrest and bread and water.

Three regimental officers were appointed to each college for the purpose of watching over our morals.

Their post was much of a sinecure, for most of us had never had any, and those who had had mislaid them after a few hours of cadet life. We were all very eager in acquiring the latest anecdotes about the dissipated ways of exalted officers of the garrison, and we strove, in our own poor little way, to emulate them. Those malpractices that we did not bring to college we acquired by studious admiration of the gorgeous demi-gods above us. To come back to college somewhat the worse for liquor was as high an achievement as the winning of the Iron Cross; and the unofficial hero of the school was he who could claim the most intimate knowledge of women. There were other non-Germans in the college besides myself, and it was one of these, a Southerner, who brought glory upon us by his misdeeds. He developed degenerate traits soon after entering, and one of his really shocking offences came to headquarters. We all expected that he would be crowned with the laurels of instant expulsion; but it was not so; and soon we learnt the reason. The King of the country which this young man had honoured by his birth had sent urgent representations to our commanding officer, together with the Cross of a high Order, that the offender was to be allowed to remain.

I remember one escapade in which I and several

others took part. The little leisure that we were granted was spent in wandering in couples, arms locked, through the park, which, as I have stated, was our store-house. It was a pleasant, natural solitude, enclosed by a rustic fence, but otherwise undefaced by the hand of the gardener. Our college, of course, was a plague-spot to the fearsome gorgons who presided over the many seminaries in the town; and no girls were taken for walks when we were about. The park, too, was regarded as no place for them, since we had made it almost our own. But on one occasion, in summer, the head of the most select girls' school, finding the park apparently deserted, thought she might venture to take her precious charges through its sylvan glades. She did so. The lambs, headed by the bell-wether, skipped into our precincts, and were about to disport themselves on the grass, when, without warning, a horde of wild cadets sprang from the bushes and surrounded them.

I have seen students' rags in England, and they can hardly be described as models of gentlemanly behaviour, but they pale to insignificance before the German military cadet's transports. While the stout perspiring matron protested loudly and with a wealth of gesture, her charges were hurried off and, with arms about their escorts, were regaled

with sausage, sardine, and cake. As I was but a small boy and not over-fond of girls, I and a friend volunteered to show the distressed lady the shortest way out of the park. It was not until we had dragged her three or four times up a bank of very loose sand that she noticed that the gates were as far away as ever.

However, just then one of the officers on duty appeared. To him she ran and, embracing him, poured out her tale of woe, and begged him to restore to her her lost lambs. We two were immediately despatched to find the girls, but the orders said nothing about bringing them back. We found them right enough, and joined the various charmed circles, where laughter and feasting were proceeding. It was not until the assembly was sounded that straggling groups of giggling Fräuleins and dishevelled cadets found their way out of the park.

Of the general education provided by the college, apart from its system, I have nothing but praise. It was not aimed, as is the training in the Army proper, at making us only military machines. A love of literature and the drama, and the fine arts generally, was fostered; and if any cadet showed a strong musical or artistic proclivity, he was encouraged and allowed to practise these pursuits; for such accomplishments permitted him to shine

in society and so take the edge off what is, after all, the crudest militarism.

But the general atmosphere of a German military college is nothing like that of, say, Woolwich or Sandhurst; and a youth who had had experience of the latter would probably find our college little better than an English penal establishment. Little or nothing was done to stimulate that healthy rivalry between corps and companies that exists in England in public schools, cadet colleges, and regiments of garrisons. Rather, it is a choice of "Get on or get out by any means possible."

Our academy, by the way, was not a Prussian institution, and Prussians were not welcomed there. A great number of the members were Hanoverians who were then less reconciled than now to Prussian methods. The training lasted for five years, from twelve to seventeen. At seventeen you passed your exams.—or did not pass them, according to circumstances—and were drafted into the Army . . . or discarded entirely.

This exam. was not over-severe. One was expected to know at least one foreign language—French or English. A little Latin was essential; usually we got as far as Tacitus. Greek was not taken. Higher mathematics could be taken by anybody with a taste for them, but only those cadets

specialised in them who were destined for the artillery or military engineering. I must say that, considering the determined slacking to which I devoted myself, I am surprised at the large amount of knowledge the instructors managed to impart to me. The system, therefore, must have its good points.

As the final exam. approached you began to think of your prospective regiment. Having decided which corps was to be favoured by your company, it was then correct for your father or guardian to offer you to this regiment. If there were a vacancy the Colonel made careful enquiries into your past, both in regard to conduct and abilities, and if he were satisfied he accepted you.

If you pass the final exam. you enter the chosen regiment as ensign—a rank corresponding to that of sergeant in our Army. Drill in the ranks follows, as with an ordinary private, and after a year of this you enter a kind of probationary stage. Throughout this period you are under the special charge of an officer, whose special duty it is to examine the *Fahnenjunker* under a microscope and report his observations. Always your education proceeds on social as well as military lines. You are obliged to dine at the officers' mess, so that they may judge of your skill in the matter of knife and

fork and the delicate negotiation of green peas and gravy. As a rule, too, you will be put to a severe test in the matter of drinking, and you become popular or unpopular according to your ability in the matter of wielding a glass for four or five hours and remaining a gentleman.

The curriculum also includes the higher arts of warfare and the subtler arts of the life of a garrison. You fight a duel or so; you get into debt and other forms of distress; you show that you are a man in a dozen different ways; and you strut about the towns in the most gorgeous uniforms that ever a soldier wore. Really, the Army ought to be popular in Germany, if only for this reason: it is the only chance you have in that country of making a really picturesque appearance. The designers of the uniforms—those of two regiments were designed by His Imperial Majesty himself—are real artists and their "creations" are harmonies of colour and, withal, aggressive. During my time as a German officer, I found that our uniform was irresistible to the girls of the town, and we often received notes from ladies of whom we had not the slightest knowledge, asking for rendezvous of the penny novelette order, namely, "You will know me quite easily. I shall be standing under a tree on the Friedrichstrasse, holding a white handkerchief."

But, although young and fond of adventure, I had moments of caution, and those moments coincided with the receipt of notes such as these.

After two years of this sort of thing, you sit for another exam. in order to qualify for a commission. If you pass, you return to your regiment with acting rank of sergeant-major. Your name is then brought before the officers of the regiment as candidate for a permanent commission. The officer in charge of the ensigns reads out the reports of the examining officer and also makes up his own report. Thereupon the Colonel puts it to the officers assembled: whether they approve of this prospective brother-officer. If they do, the paper by which your fate is sealed is signed by all of them, beginning with the junior subaltern. It is then forwarded to the Highest Authority. If, however, the officers should object to you, reasons have to be plainly stated and also sent to the same Personage. The story is told of one very superior corps, whose officers, on one occasion, declined a candidate because the prefix *Von* was missing from his name. At once the War Lord replied that if he chose every officer in his army should be entitled to the prefix Von, whether he held it on entering or not. However, the young officer who does not carry that little addition to his name when he enters a regiment whose other mem-

bers do, is likely, before very long, to be transferred—at his own request.

I remember one case of a young man who was drafted into a superlatively crack regiment, where every officer had at least *Von* to his name, if not *Von und zu.* He was a smart fellow, a capable horseman and a clever soldier, but he had not been there a month before he applied for a transference. I learned that he had received very scant courtesy at the mess, and, although he was entered for that regiment at the special request of the commanding Colonel, a personal friend, even that exalted officer could not make things pleasant for him.

There are other ways than those so far described of obtaining a commission. If the young man intended for the Army does not enter a military academy, he is expected to pass a very high school exam. and qualify for some University. Every young man has, of course, to become a soldier anyway, but if he decides to adopt arms as a profession, his father, while the boy is still a 'Varsity student, introduces him to the Colonel of a regiment. Generally both father and son have to attend a mess dinner, and pass through the social ordeal. If he is approved, he is allowed to join as *Avantageur.* He lives in barracks for a short time, as a private, but he must buy his own uniform, and, in the case

of cavalry, he must pay for the hire of a mount. After a week or so he is invested with a mystic button on his collar, the badge of the *Gefreiter,* which absolves him from sentry-go, and gives him a rank corresponding to that of lance-corporal.

Then, with other youngsters of the same status, he is allowed to live out of barracks, and has a man-servant for the cleaning of his kit and equipment. After autumn manœuvres he is promoted sergeant; and then he follows the same course as those who emerge from the military college.

The officers' reserve is formed mostly from men who have passed through the ranks. In the cavalry one-third of the squadron leaves every year to take its place in the reserves; these are privates and *Gefreiter* only. In the case of officers the procedure is as follows: Youngsters who have matriculated may join a regiment of their choice as one-year volunteers. They are distinguished by a black and white cord on the shoulder-strap. They, too, rise rapidly during their year in the ranks, unless they are singularly inept, and they leave after their year with the rank of acting sergeant-major. They are called up for training occasionally, and in due course, if they are thoroughly efficient and desirable, they are qualified and are given a commission as officer in the reserve. In this capacity they serve

only at odd times—mostly in the summer; hence they get their distinguishing sobriquet—*die sommeronkels.* Their presence with the regiment when training is intended to have the effect of reviving in them the true spirit of militarism which may have lost its strength and grown fusty; and by means of this spirit it is expected that they, as business men, will carry out the high principles of Chauvinism in the commercial world to the greater glory of their native land.

The mention of autumn manœuvres reminds me of a great moment of my life when I was a wee cadet. During manœuvres on one occasion, the cadets formed the right of the Army Corps. William I had come down to inspect this corps, which was pitted against a Prussian Army Corps. In these manœuvres, by the way, racial animosity was so strong that the men of both sides were charging their rifles with stones or small potatoes or any other missile they could find, in order to damage their opponents. At the end of the operations special military precautions were taken against a sudden influx of social democrats, who, it was anticipated, were bent on creating disorder; and we cadets were told off to take our share in safeguarding the aged Kaiser, who was spending the night in the town.

So, at night, I found myself in one of the main streets with a rifle many sizes too large for me, a heavy helmet, and bayonet fixed. Suddenly, down upon me swooped an immense crowd of demonstrators, socialists and royalists, in a glorious mêlée, and I, in spite of fixed bayonet, was tossed about from side to side like a cork in a mill-race. In the midst of my futile struggles, I perceived a tall figure approaching, wearing a field-marshal's uniform, and with an inch of red wig showing underneath his cap. He passed close to me, and I had just room in which to use my elbows and present arms. He looked down at the small atom of warrior-to-be, and smiled kindly. It was the aged Field-Marshal von Moltke.

I am sorry to say that I did not obtain my commission by any of the methods described, for I left the military academy long before my time was up. I found the weary hours of preparation hang very heavily on my hands, and as I knew that someone always found mischief for idle hands to do, I set myself studiously to work making caricatures of all my superior officers in the garrison, beginning with the Commandant and working down to the senior cadets. Unfortunately, I had nearly completed my collection when my company commander came my way, spotted the drawings, and confiscated

them. When I saw them again it was in the orderly room, and the Colonel was poring over them intently. The interview was brief but sufficient.

He looked up. "My young friend, I believe you are intended for the British Army. Is it not so?"

I admitted it.

"Then you had better take your works of art and go there at once!"

So I went.

## THE OFFICER AT WORK AND PLAY

MY career as cadet being cut short owing to a lack of the humour sense in my commanders, I carried my sword elsewhere.

After many years, some of which were spent in India, in the cavalry, I had a mind to return to the German Army, and I therefore applied in writing to the Emperor himself, asking for a commission in the Prussian cavalry. After due and tedious inquiries had been made my request was granted, and in full measure; for I found, to my surprise, that my commission was ante-dated by several years. This, no doubt, was a subtle appreciation of my having seen service abroad, although in a different Army. It struck me as very generous in itself, but it also had a useful purpose for the Fatherland, in that it introduced fresh blood and new ideas. The German Army at that time was never wholly averse from admitting novel methods or from learning from other military organisations, especially when experience accompanied the exponent of those methods.

There have always been vagrant Britons in the Prussian or Austrian services, and, until the Boer War broke out, they were always *bien vus*. Indeed, many famous generals of foreign armies were Britons. There was, for instance, the gallant Keith, a sturdy Scot, whose name is borne, in his honour, by a regiment of Prussian infantry. Again, in Vienna, amongst a galaxy of military notabilities I found a statue erected to perpetuate the glory of an Englishman bearing the plain name of Brown, who had been Count, Field-Marshal, and Lord High Everything Else in the Austrian Army.

On taking up my commission I was most kindly received by my brother officers, a courtesy I was not anticipating, since I had jumped in over the heads of several of them. However, I had come by the Imperial orders, so all was well. I noticed a considerable change in the tone of the mess. It was no longer as "military" as it had been years ago when I first peeped, from the academy, into the German Army. Greater demands were made on the life of the officers, and, as many of them were sons of very wealthy manufacturers, there did not exist quite that perfect camaraderie which had been the feature of the old Prussian corps of officers. Personally, I found these wealthier men uncommonly good company, more liberal-minded than

their very noble comrades, and quite excellent and keen soldiers. Too, they had more of the sporting spirit.

I was relieved to find that the mess was not beyond my means, for we lived quite simply. It was just about that time that the Emperor had tried to insist upon the virtues of simplicity and abstinence, so, at the mess, the officers were simple and they abstained . . . reserving their energies in the matter of extravagance for the life beyond the barrack square. The furniture of the mess-room was plain, and the food the same, though of good quality and plentiful. If I remember rightly, dinner cost but eighteen-pence, washed down with the wine of the Fatherland, which we drank not only out of patriotism, but because it was "simple" and really not bad at the price.

I was a little surprised to find that whisky had become a common table decoration, together with English ale, and a drop of Scotch often went round in place of the old schnapps or curaçao.

Our guest-night was Wednesday, when all the officers of the regiment, married or unmarried, were expected to appear. This was generally a very cheery function, and, as related in the previous chapter, new-comers were put through a still further test in the matter of absorbing liquor. In fact, new

and old stagers were on their mettle in this respect, and curious incidents were sometimes witnessed.

If a young subaltern had recently joined, the mess orderly would come round the table to the youngster with a message from the captain that the latter wished to drink with him. Whereupon the subaltern would have to rise to attention, bow, and drain his glass. The newly-joined officer must perform this ceremony with every officer present, who, each in their turn, sends him a similar message. When that is finished it is the subaltern's duty, if he is still capable, to return the compliment, with each one, beginning with the senior officer, and continuing so long as he is able to distinguish anybody. The last state of that man need not be described. In my own case I had picked up while in India a very simple method of going through these heavy drinking functions without losing my head; but that prescription is too valuable to give away in the present pages. It is worth a book to itself.

One of our great joys, on guest-nights, was to join in the band after dinner. I was unable to perform on any instrument, so I either rolled the kettle-drums or led the orchestra astray with the baton. There was a fixed scale of fines for this disorder, but the fun was always worth the penalty.

Those unfortunate youngsters, the *Fahnenjunker,*

have to dine at mess every evening, unless they can provide the commanding officer with a good and satisfactory excuse. This is so that their table manners may be carefully watched and not allowed to rust or fall into disrepair, and that their thirst may be regulated, except on state occasions. Of course, their manners were, as a matter of fact, very good, as the old days are passed when, for instance, the Vienna Court etiquette forbade guests to throw their chicken bones under the table, since it made so much extra work for the servants. There are, however, several pitfalls for the new-comer, no matter how polished and well-bred he may be in the matter of general social usages. He may not, for example, begin smoking until the senior officer present has lit up. In this connection I remember once that one of the dashing young diners, finding the time between smokes hang rather heavily, sent the orderly to the senior officer with a half-burnt match as a hint. He did not remain long in that mess. Another curious point is that all "shop" of whatever kind is barred at table. When any subject of that sort is touched upon by a thoughtless youngster the senior will give a sign to the mess-sergeant, who thereupon brings in a diminutive pair of breeches on a stand, which is placed gravely and formally before the offender. Again, unlike the English officers'

mess, the German mess puts no bar on conversation touching the ladies of the garrison and their probable ethical standards, though, of course, the subject must be handled delicately lest the lady be anyone of importance or of immediate concern to some member of the company. In that case . . . a duel.

Duelling, by the way, is not now so prevalent as of old, and I never knew of a case in the regiment itself. Personally, I had but one experience of this pleasing pastime, and that, perhaps fortunately, fizzled out before our wigs were on the green. The occasion was a little contretemps at a club in the town. Two or three cavalry officers and myself were visiting the civil club after dinner, and were making a tour of the rooms, bearing our swords and caps in our hands, to see whether anyone of interest were there. In one room we stumbled upon a group of infantry officers playing cards. Following the sacred law of etiquette we clicked heels and bowed, and continued our tour of inspection. Finding nothing and nobody of any interest to us we left our swords and caps and returned to the room occupied by the card-players, without, this time, repeating the ceremony. Thereupon one of the group rose and asked me who was the senior of our party. As it happened it was I.

"You have omitted to bow!" he snapped.

"Well," said I, "what about it?" or words to that effect.

"The usual consequences!"

"Very well."

Next morning I had, in accordance with custom, to bring the matter before the proper authorities: first, to report to my colonel and then to seek out a member of the Court of Honour of my own rank in the regiment. This Court, by the way, is elected annually by the officers themselves, and consists of a captain and two subalterns. On occasions such as this the Court has to meet and to adjudicate on given dispute, and give their verdict whether or not a duel shall be fought. Their decision is irrevocable. When I entered my colonel's orderly room, however, I found the colonel of the infantry regiment already there, and his general attitude seemed to suggest extreme contrition.

My colonel turned very fiercely upon me, said that he knew the errand upon which I had come, and barked at me: "We shall shoot, Herr Leutnant X . . . ?"

I bowed. "Yes, Colonel, we will!"

Thereupon the infantry colonel, and the aggrieved officers, who were waiting outside, expressed their willingness to apologise. Would we accept it?

I glanced at my colonel, and gathered from a

flicker of his eye that I might, without loss of dignity to the regiment, accept. So, after seemly hesitation, I bowed once more; the unfortunates were called in; they clicked heels, bowed, apologised in subdued tones, and were about to leave again. But my colonel interposed with a question to myself:

"You are going to the mess, Herr Leutnant X. . . . ?"

I took the hint, and the bunch of us, infantry and cavalry officers, left together. So what threatened to be a bloodthirsty encounter ended peaceably, except that I had considerable difficulty that night, or, rather, early next morning, in inducing my late opponents to enter a cab. Eventually, however, I lifted them in one by one and saw them safely home, and the feeling between the two regiments was, as the tale tellers have it, happy ever afterwards.

It is generally supposed, not only among the uninitiated, but even among other branches of the service, that cavalry regiments are extremely exclusive. This, in my experience, is unfounded. Of course, you cannot, perhaps, guard yourself from swaggering in such a resplendent uniform as the German cavalry carries; but this is the mere subtle effect of clothes on physical deportment. Dress a man up dowdily and he will walk dowdily; dress him like Solomon or the lilies of the field and he

will simply have to strut. However, there is nothing beneath that strut. One explanation of the apparent exclusiveness is that a corps of officers of a cavalry regiment is a smaller body than that of infantry of the same strength; it is consequently more compact, becomes drawn together, and is inclined to find sufficient social intercourse in its own circle. In fact, it is more like a family.

And in my regiment we had a good deal of family life: some of it pleasing, and much of it boring. This domesticity, however, was well meant; and one of the features of our week was to drive out in parties, on Sunday afternoons, with the married ladies of the regiment. Arrived in the country we would split up in parties and seek refreshment at some *Gasthaus* in the forest. There were, of course, other less innocent amusements connected with these drives, but of these I need not speak.

When an officer felt that he must break away for a little light-hearted frolic, he generally took the precaution to divest himself of his glory and slip out in mufti. I remember a case where a brother officer of mine narrowly escaped serious trouble. He was out in mufti, and was returning through a narrow street in the town, after having had what he described as the time of his life, when, rounding a corner, he walked into the arms of his colonel.

There was a moment of panic, and then, collecting himself, and apologising for the collision, he inquired: "Why, surely you are the Colonel of the ——? Because I have a brother in your regiment. Give him my love, will you, and tell him I'm always so busy now I never get a chance to call on him?"

Next morning, this young man was invited to call upon the Colonel in his orderly room.

"Oh, by the way," remarked The Old Man, "I only wanted to see you to say that if I meet that brother of yours in the town again I shall give you three days' rest."

As I have pointed out, the enormous increase of wealth and the corresponding demands for luxuries of all kinds are not without their effects on the Army. You will find there to-day men holding commissions who would never have had the slightest chance of them thirty or forty years ago. In fact, the class from which they come did not then exist. I refer to the manufacturing class, which forms the real progressive class of Germany. Even under the strictest discipline, the sons of these men must retain something of the parental notions of philosophy and conduct, and their brother officers, in some regiments, are sharply on the look-out for any expression of this trait, remembering that they themselves spring from a stock which has inherited titles of

nobility—and little else—for countless generations. Then again, among these latter are different grades, many of whom are not yet reconciled. You may, for example, hear an officer of very old family complain that Von So-and-so is only *schwertadel,* meaning that his title was gained by the sword so recently as the middle of the eighteenth century, instead of being, like himself, of the finer clay, coming of an effete and mysteriously diseased ancestry which, during its pious work in the Crusades, swapped vices with the people of the Orient.

With the admission of the wealthy burgher into the preserves of the junker came the Semite, carefully concealed by the scintillating coin which accompanied him. Whatever the faults of the German Jew may be—and they are very many—this much may be said for him: that he is what years of oppression by the natives of his adopted country have made him. Having been prevented from exerting all the wonderful powers of his race, and from displaying that fighting capacity which distinguishes his people, it is not to be wondered at that he had recourse to other means by which to assert his rights. There is not the slightest doubt that an enormous amount of Jewish blood has found its way into the higher flights of the German nobility; and proof of this may be found in that extremely

interesting book, with the punning title, "Semi-Gotha," which was suppressed in Germany and elsewhere immediately on its appearance. Some of the Oriental traits have gone with this infusion, and have led to the inevitable and obvious results.

One direct result was evidenced during the Zabern incident last year, which showed clearly the gulf that lay between the bulk of the Army and those in high places and in the favoured Corps of Guards. I found that officers of the line, mostly junker or still strong adherents of Prussian militarism, were strongly agitated by the slight concessions and what they considered the leniency shown to the burghers of Zabern. Whereas the military cabinet, and those directly influenced by it, the Army Corps of Guards, were inclined to take a wider view. This was naturally ascribed to Jewish influence in high quarters!

It is interesting to note that the regiment concerned in the fracas was one thoroughly soaked in the true Prussian spirit. That was withdrawn and relieved of its duties by a regiment of Saxon infantry. The Saxons are a kindlier and less aggressive race than the Prussians, and Saxony itself is a largely manufacturing country. Many unkind things were said about the Saxons at this period, and the old proverb, "Saxons are always false"—originally based on Saxony's struggles to escape

from her unhappy position during the Napoleonic wars—was revived—and not to the credit of the 15th Army Corps, to which both regiments belonged.

The effects of Zabern were extremely widespread, and, indeed, it may even be said to have influenced the march of events which has brought Europe into war. One of its immediate results was to emphasise everywhere the growing unpopularity of the Kaiser, and to enhance the popularity of the Crown Prince. The former is accused of being in the hands of Jew financiers; the latter is the beau-ideal of the German military hierarchy. This state of affairs was thoroughly well understood in high circles, of course, for nothing is unknown in a country where secret service is the most perfected of all the arts. Therefore, something had to be done. That something is going on now.

But to return to the officers. As I was saying, luxury is manifesting itself in all branches of the Army, though not, in obedience to the Imperial desires, in barracks. The simple life of nut and banana in barracks. The more complex life elsewhere, for officers never live in barracks, but have rooms or establishments in the town. Of late years, however, an attempt was made to model the regimental mess on the British style, and, to this end,

some of the officers took up quarters in barracks.

An unmarried officer's quarters in the town are, according to custom, free from any assault, but they are expected to be open day and night to approved visitors. A familiar garrison-town phrase is *militärfromm,* amenable to military ways, which applies principally to the other sex. This open house principle works out in ways which can barely be hinted at in such a book as this.

The living rooms of a German officer are usually much more luxuriously furnished than those of a British officer. If you visit the rooms of a British officer in barracks, you will find nothing but the very plainest furniture and appointments, of the kind that can be packed and transported at once. He may have a few sporting prints on the wall; he is sure to have a few ladies' photographs on the mantelpiece; but that is the limit of his decorations. The German officer, on the other hand, likes the heavy kind of furniture peculiar to his country; massive pieces with a capacity for retaining cigar smoke and all other odours.

It was while I was still in the Army that the highest authority in the land made his great advertising effort in behalf of German champagne, extolling its virtues, its flavour, and its value in increased efficiency. But when it was offered to him

at dinner it soon incurred his displeasure; and when, a little later, we had a Royal visitor to our mess, he was very careful to mention beforehand which brand he preferred. It did not come from the Rhine. The lunch was a Gargantuan affair, but the champagne he liked was given only to a favoured few who sat around him. The rest of us drank from the bottle with the silver neck.

It was in the mess of this regiment that I was first introduced to what is known as an aquarium. This is a very large glass with a capacity for a pint of English ale and a pint of German champagne. Its immediate effect, after a heavy morning of squadron training, is very cooling; its subsequent effect is . . . ?

I remember one curious incident on a very jolly guest-night at our mess. The guest of honour was old Falkenstein, who commanded the 15th Army Corps, a typical South German, a Würtemburger, with commanding figure, wiry and active. The adjutant of the regiment, a very popular young officer, had an amiable habit of entertaining us after dinner by dancing in the approved ballerina manner, if and when the spirit moved him. It moved him that evening, and his performance was as graceful as Hessian boots would allow. His popularity afforded him some special licence, and so, taking advantage

of this, he danced up to Falkenstein, and asked him to dance a turn or two with him. Falkenstein pleaded his age, his weariness, and the fact that it was after dinner. But the adjutant insisted, so finally Falkenstein agreed on condition that he should set the style and that the adjutant should follow him. On this understanding, he got up from his chair, and, with the tails of his long frock coat flying, and the broad red-striped trousers revolving in the air, the commander-in-chief went round and round the big dining-room, turning catherine-wheels!

The officer's morning work being devoted to squadron drill, the afternoon finds him busy with foot drill, lance and sword drill, or musketry. In the summer, the subaltern is generally able to get away from work by six o'clock in the evening, which gives him time to dress comfortably for dinner, which, in our mess, was at seven. In the evenings he is free to sit out at concerts and drink beer, a pleasant change from the arduous and unending toil which falls to him in the winter months. If he does not sit out and drink beer, he may take excursions into the country usually of a sentimental nature. But neither in summer nor in winter has he any time for the games which are part of the daily day of his British brother. There is for him

nothing like polo, tennis, or kindred games. Occasionally a game of tennis was possible, but for this, special permission had to be obtained, and it was years before permission to play in flannels was granted. I did once play a few sets in a beautifully-laced tunic and Hessian boots, but it hardly came up to my ideas of enjoyment, and I never repeated the attempt. But those were the early days of tennis in Germany, when I remember a German lady asking for a chair to be placed in the centre of the court, as she preferred to play sitting down.

Practically, the evening life of every garrison is given up to the worship of Bacchus or Venus, or both. At the same time, I would advise Englishmen to be careful of basing their notions of German garrison life on translations of German military novels, such as "Jena or Sedan," "Life in a Garrison Town," etc. I knew personally many of the men who figure in ex-Lieut. Bilse's book; and it should be remembered, in reading those pages, that the garrison town he describes is a frontier garrison town; and such a place is, in the opinion of German officers, the last place vacated by the Evil One.

An appointment to a garrison on the Polish frontier is about as acceptable to the young Prussian officer as an East End beat is to a London policeman. The regiments are split up into their com-

ponent parts and quartered in small villages. The country is flat and unlovely. The towns holding social distractions are very few, and miles away from one another. And added to this is the constantly recurring batches of stubborn Polish recruits, who appear to have about as much intelligence as a rabbit, but who are really working extremely hard in efforts to devise ways and means whereby they can shirk their daily tasks. The effect of this on an officer or a non-com., already dissatisfied with his lot in being quartered in such a derelict spot, can easily be imagined. It has invariably one result . . . drink; and that leads to still more determined efforts in Prussianism or Sadism.

Practically, a garrison on the Polish frontier is a form of punishment. The strictest punishment of all, and a man's last chance of making good is to be quartered in one of the colonies. Special inducements are held out to non-coms. to accept appointments here, but no consideration of this sort is shown to the officer. As a matter of fact—a fact which will tell greatly against any effort Germany may ever make in the future in the way of expansion; that is, if she has a future—as a matter of fact, the German is not suited to the tropics. Almost immediately he develops a complaint which he calls

*Tropenkoller,* literally, tropical madness, to which the chief imports of German colonies—beer and champagne—add their mighty strength. One of the men who had recently returned from West Africa told me that he could drink a whole bottle of champagne without withdrawing the bottle from his lips. As it was one of his favourite tricks he did it, for our edification; but he was useless for social purposes for the rest of the evening.

As a fairly true picture of life in a garrison town, I think the following quotations are fairly illuminating. They have the ring of truth, coming from actual experience, and they are not overcharged with colour as Bilse's narrative, for dramatic purposes, necessarily is. These passages are from the suppressed diary of that engaging lady, Louise of Saxony, of which I happen to possess a scarce copy. The passages are as follows:—

> "The Duke is dying of ennui, they say, and to kill time engages in all sorts of manual labour. When he gets tired of that he blows the trombone. 'They won't let him marry,' said my cousin Bernhardt of Weimar, to whom I am indebted for this fragment. 'Not even temporarily. And they are trying the same game on me. My garrison—a dungheap. The people

there—males and females—entirely unacquainted with soap and water. Nothing in the world to do but drink and gamble.'

"Leopold, my brother, too, spoke of himself. His garrison—a mudhole in Poland. One-story houses and everybody peeping into everybody's windows. The few notables of the town and neighbourhood tickled to death because they have an Imperial Highness with them, and the fool of an Imperial Highness goes and besots himself with a country lass. He rented a small house for her, and spends much of his time there when not on the drill-ground. Hence intense indignation among the respectable ladies. An Imperial Highness among us, and he doesn't come to our dances, he doesn't visit, and sends regrets when invited! Poor Marja suffers intensely from the venom of the officers' wives. From morning till night they do nothing but gossip about Leopold and his girl, and send anonymous letters to one or the other of them. Of course, Leopold can't get along without his salary and appanage. Father can't give him much; and the Kaiser won't because the clergy intrigues against him as a free-thinker and non-church-goer."

"Bernhardt has just complained to me again of his life. 'They planted me,' he said, 'in the

God-forsakenest hole in the kingdom. If I saw a pretty woman in my garrison from one year's end to the other, I should die of joy. And then the newspapers wonder why we develop the habits that we do. Just to kill time, I am learning the carpenter's trade, for I lodge in a carpenter's house as innocent of sanitary arrangements as a bushman's hut.' "

From this it will be seen how happy is the life of the frontier garrison officer.

## THE NON-COMS.

A VERY important personage in each regiment is the Squadron Sergeant-Major—*Der Herr Wachtmeister*. It is in his power to advance or retard promotion for certain of the youngsters; and he can, if he chooses, make the life of the one-year volunteer extremely uncomfortable. However, as most of these young men have pocket-money, there is a way out of the difficulty. This scandal became so acute some years ago that all presents to these officers were forbidden by Imperial command. However, as most of them have wives, the game still goes on.

When one considers the almost unwieldy size of the Army there is really very little bribery and corruption. Much—perhaps too much—of these petty scandals is heard in other countries, and details are eagerly seized upon by the foreign Press as examples of the rottenness of the whole service. But, in an army which consists of about half the entire population of the Empire, the amount of corruption is insignificant in proportion. To one who knows the service as intimately as I, the wonder is that it is so

small, human nature, particularly German human nature, being what it is.

Perhaps one explanation is that opportunities are fewer and less favourable than in other armies. Certainly the highest officials do not place overmuch confidence in, or put an undue strain upon the integrity of their subordinates. For instance, as soon as a subordinate frontier official has acquired a knowledge of the language of the neighbouring country, he is removed; for, since the German military service deals so largely in the consciences of sub-officials of other countries, they naturally expect some attempted return of this courtesy on the part of their enemies.

A good deal of misconduct goes on among the lower ranks, I believe, such as the selling of shells and parts of gun-sightings, by the non-coms.; but the only instance which actually came to my knowledge was when we were quartered in a small village. There a peasant showed us a whole collection of shells which had been brought back by his sons in the artillery.

Non-coms. of the squadron are not, on the whole, a very satisfactory set. The increase of wealth and the formation of a luxury-loving class has changed the whole tenour of national life, and the young man of to-day would probably, like another

famous soldier, rather have a bar of chocolate than a half-dozen cartridges in his pocket. Another weak point is the fact that the pay of the non-com., such as it is, remains stationary, with the result that the man who fills the post is of the type that would have little chance of employment outside the Army. He is either drawn from the schools for non-coms., of which there are several in Germany, and which produce none too satisfactory results; or else he goes through the ranks in the ordinary way, and then is re-engaged. It may happen that, though he is accepted, there is no room for him in his old regiment. He is then permitted to advertise for a post as non-com. in some other regiment, and, wherever there may be a vacancy, he is taken on. The re-engagement is for the term of one year, and, in order to earn his pension or a guaranteed civil post (either in the railways, postal service, or police force, and so on) he has to be re-engaged annually and serve a certain number of years. With this prospect in view, he mostly spends those intervening years, between hard work and peaceful employment as policeman, in doing the irreducible minimum of his many duties. Punishment for derelictions of duty never takes the form of reduction to the ranks, but the offender is liable, like his fellows, to arrest and confinement.

Indeed, it is unusually difficult to get rid of an unsatisfactory non-com., for though the squadron commander may find him faulty and wish to dispense with his service, he has to bear in mind that he will have considerable trouble in replacing him. The non-com. problem in the German Army is almost as vexed as that of the domestic servant in the London suburb. You have to put up with what you can get, and be thankful. The only means by which you can get a better article is by offering better treatment and richer inducements. Quite recently the pay of these valuable men was raised, with that of the officers', but the addition was so insignificant as to have hardly any effect in bringing in better stuff. The evil done in the first instance can hardly now be removed; many of the regimental officers now with the troops are of a demonstrably lower class than those who fought in 1870-71. They have supported their authority by purely German methods of brute force and terrorism, and neither of these, I think, is likely to produce good results from the fighters.

The men of my regiment were recruited mainly from the manufacturing districts, and were very much tainted with Socialistic ideas, of which, as one might expect, they understood about half, if so much. I was interested to study this phenome-

non, and to note, from time to time, the fluctuation in the numbers of their adherents, and the external causes. When the autumn season came round, when recruits were drafted in for their compulsory service, we were warned in advance, by the police authorities of each district, of those men who were suspected of embracing this very sinister faith. Thus, on one occasion—it was the year when the Emperor William sent his famous telegram to Krüger—we were advised that there had been an enormous increase in the number of Socialists in every district, and we had instructions to watch the autumn recruits with much vigilance.

I took the trouble to trace this sudden conversion to its source; and found it to be due to the fact that several large manufacturers in our district had been compelled to close down, since English orders were withdrawn from them in consequence of the telegram. (One big industry, I may remark, in passing, concerned itself with tinware, which went almost exclusively to India, the most popular article being a little tin lamp warranted to explode in the hands of the pious Hindoo, and thereby comfort him with a manifestation of the power of one or other of his gods.)

The pay of the common soldier in Germany is a trifle hardly worth mentioning. I believe it is,

gross, a matter of three-halfpence a day, and I fancy that there are some deductions made from that. However, the principle is that the German serves his Fatherland for love of service, not from any sordid motives of gain or personal comfort. It is for this that he endures the brutality of his sergeants, the arrogance of his officers, and the kindly patronage of his great master. For this elusive chimera he suffers at the gentle hands of all who are above him, for many years, and I hope he finds in it a true solace. If he does he must be superhuman, and his patriotism must be greater than poets have yet told of.

## MARRIED LIFE IN A GERMAN GARRISON

IT is a matter of some difficulty for the German officer to get married; and even when he is allowed to do so he may not do it by himself. The motto of his superiors seems to be that of a famous English furnishing company, which provides you with a home on the hire system: "You find the girl; we do the rest!"

Practically the only thing that the officer is allowed to do entirely on his own responsibility is love-making. There are no regulations in this matter, and I have shown elsewhere that he takes full advantage of this privilege.

But when he really desires to marry the lady, then trouble begins. He is not, however, compelled to marry a German girl, which is some slight concession. I myself did not. But as most German officers do, let us see how he sets about it. The reason, by the way, is not always altruistic. It is not always "Love me and the world is mine!" but "Marry me, and promotion and a career may be mine!" For the German officer has become a by-

word and a hissing as a seeker after the richly-dowered lady; and there is much to be said in excuse, having regard to his pay, and his small chances of keeping his end up in a big garrison, *and* the necessity for "making good." As a matter of fact, I have heard a prospective bridegroom discussing the approaching function at mess, and talking quite cynically of the lady's past. Indeed, some time ago an Army Order had to be issued forbidding officers to patronise matrimonial agencies. The practice, however, still continues.

The most serious matter, perhaps, is the getting engaged. It is more or less a semi-public ceremony. It must be announced in all the papers, the news must be communicated to all friends and acquaintances on gilt-edged cards, and various houses must be attended; and, indeed, everything must be done to make the joyful tidings as public as possible and so cut off all lines of retreat; for to get disengaged again is a harder task than that of getting married. When the young officer has become engaged it is usually understood that he has had a serious discussion with the father of the lady, chiefly on the subject of his own debts. It is then taken for granted that the prospective father-in-law has consented to liquidate these debts, and has accepted the privilege of investing his funds in this handsome

article which will give its name and its military distinction to his daughter. That the soldier should pay anything for the privilege of acquiring the heart and hand of the lady is never thought of; probably because it is known that he never could.

At this point a paternal Government steps in and insists on a certain sum being settled on one or other of the contracting parties, so that the widow may not become a charge on the State. The authorities, I may say, exact very sufficient proof of the existence of income before formal consent is given.

In the meantime the colonel of the regiment has to sanction the engagement. This is not done until he has made inquiries as to the lady's antecedents, social position, general reputation, and to the financial condition of her family. Here I may point out that pure Semitic blood is not admitted into the charmed circle of the Imperial military life; but, as already stated, it somehow manages to get there, and to bring the much-coveted gold with it. The colonel having given his sanction, particulars, with the colonel's decision, have to be forwarded to the very highest authority, when permission is usually given.

The official part of the business ends with the wearisome function of actually getting married. You then try to be happy for life, and if the young

bride be German she will probably take her place quite comfortably in the life of her husband's regiment. Much of her happiness, however, depends on the relative percentages of old nobility and *nouveaux riches* in the regiment. If after tasting the joys of matrimony the dashing adventurer would seek divorce, he would probably have to kill the other man in the case, for which he would be imprisoned in a fortress and then dismissed the service. If he did not shoot him . . . well, then, too, he would be dismissed. Or be shot by the other man.

As I was in the position of marrying an Englishwoman I give my own experiences of married life in the regiment. The English girl in such a position has much to learn in social duties, privileges, and so on; and I do not advise her to undertake the adventure unless she has a strong sense of humour. The first few days of her married life in a garrison town she will spend in driving round with her husband, paying calls. As a rule, those called upon are apprised of her visit, and arrange not to be at home. This is very considerate in a country where social manners are not remarkable for their elegance. You, on your part, are expected to extend a similar courtesy. Then she has to be inspected by the ladies of the regiment; and this is generally done by means of a dinner given by the wife of

the commanding officer, or, if he have no wife, the wife of the next in seniority.

On this occasion the bride is, for perhaps the only time, allowed to sit in the place of honour on the right-hand corner of the sofa. The other ladies gather round and ask more or less impertinent questions. They go very closely into the husband's habits, and are not averse from hinting at what they know of past *affaires,* and, generally, of his little ways before he entered the indissoluble bonds. This, of course, shows their superiority, as the husband's rank necessarily affects the wife's position, and must regulate her conduct.

Then, during the next week or so, follows a sequence of weary dinner-parties, long, dull, with overmuch food and wine. After dinner the men and the ladies separate, the ladies to the drawing-room, the men to the smoking-room. Both drink beer for the rest of the evening, and discuss the obvious and the futile. Of course, a subaltern's wife may not leave before the wife of the senior officer present; and in every movement of these deadly functions precedence of rank steps in and, in the case of the unwary or the nervous young girl, leads to confusion and dismay. But I must admit that the ladies of the garrison were extremely kind to my wife.

As she was an Englishwoman we had, of course, many humorous situations, chiefly centring on the servant question. For instance, when we were engaging a cook the best recommendation that the worthy soul brought with her was that she was engaged to a sergeant in my squadron. This seemed, to her German mind, sufficient. My wife saw it in a different light, but as we were unable to get another she was engaged. We scented trouble, somehow, in this matter, and we got it.

One morning, when returning from parade, I learnt that there was trouble in the kitchen, and that the cook wished to see me. She tearfully explained, at some length, that her sergeant had got engaged elsewhere while on leave. She had been to the barracks to see him, had drawn him out, and had expressed her opinion of him in clear, forcible language to the other non-coms. Now she wanted my advice. As we were getting impatient for our meal, and as I could not, at a moment's notice, disengage my sergeant from the other object of his affections, I suggested that she forget him and that, in my own judgment, he was engaged many times over to many girls. She then inquired which of the other sergeants of the squadron I could recommend; she had cast her eye upon the standard-bearer, but I argued that a person

in so exalted a station would be an expensive luxury, and that, if she took my advice, she would leave the light cavalry severely alone, since they were so light in matters of the heart. Whereupon she mingled her tears with beer, for that and many following days, and somehow we managed to get lunch. Some time later she came to me with smiles to inform me of an engagement. She apologised for the fact that her lover this time was an infantryman. She had never loved a foot-slogger before, but he was so persistent. Our lunch that day was extremely well served.

A subaltern, by the way, is only allowed one soldier-servant, who has to perform all duties. As a rule, he can perform none. I happened to have a groom, and after my marriage I tried to train him for indoor service and waiting at table. I furnished him with a neat livery and a pair of cotton gloves, and detailed instructions how he should stand behind my chair, and how comport himself, while the parlourmaid stood behind my wife's chair. On his first appearance in this rôle we had just begun dinner, when my wife asked in English: "Whatever is that funny little man doing?" At the same time I noticed that the parlourmaid was convulsed with suppressed laughter, and, on looking round, I found that my fine war-

rior had retired to the corner, where he stood with his hands meekly folded and face to the wall. For, as he explained, among his class it is not considered etiquette to watch your superiors do anything so disgusting as eat; he would as soon, or sooner, have been an onlooker at a lady's toilet.

Again, when the troopers of a squadron come, as in duty bound they must, to report personally to me a promotion or an arrest or any similar happening, they are shown into the drawing-room. In one case when my wife received a group of them she had quite a bad quarter of an hour; for there they stood in the centre of the room, stolid, immovable, and thoroughly miserable, and quite unable to explain the reason of their presence.

Another servant of mine was a dear, good fellow, but his mental processes were distinctly slow; and he was sorely puzzled when, during the Boer War, I retired from the German Army and went to fight for England in South Africa. On my departure for the front the poor fellow was most anxious to know whether he was to bring his lance with him. It was only after long, long argument that I could make him understand that he was not accompanying me.

## THE TRAINING OF RECRUITS

I HAVE spoken, in a previous chapter, of the recent changes in the public attitude towards the army. In consequence of the commercial prosperity of the country, soldiering is no longer the most popular profession, so far as non-coms. are concerned, and, as a result, an inferior class has to be drawn upon. Herein lies the explanation of much of that brutality and the prevalence of suicide among recruits of which we, in other countries, hear so much—perhaps too much.

In no army, of course, does the recruit have a too-pleasant time. I have witnessed more than a little callous treatment of recruits in the British Army, and elsewhere; but this is, perhaps, no more than a reflected form of the treatment meted out to the "new boy" at any big school. In the German Army, his lot is distinctly not a happy one.

Recruiting takes place in October of each year, for three years' service (in the cavalry). One-third of every squadron is sent on reserve, and recruits are called in to fill the vacancies. My own

regiment, light cavalry, was recruited from a large manufacturing district, and, as a rule, the men were small, averaging a height of 5 foot 4 inches, and of inferior physique. With cavalry, of course, physique is not so important a factor as with infantry; so that when my little lot would turn out on parade I would invariably find men with bad feet, or crooked legs. A more unhappy lot of soldiers-to-be you never saw than these, as they gathered, with their little portmanteaux, in the Barrack Square.

As a rule, they are given free choice of squadron; and it is curious how widespread is the reputation of each squadron commander. Again and again, at each recruiting season, one observes a rush for one particular squadron, and a total neglect of another. The squadron to which I was attached fell into the latter class, for the Commander was a man of many weaknesses and uncertain temper. However, the full complement has to be found for every squadron, with the result that I had a peculiarly stubborn lot to deal with.

The first detail of the recruit's life is the fitting of uniforms. He is then a soldier. The habits of the non-coms. soon begin to show themselves now. There is no excess of friendliness anywhere. The men who are in their second and third year make

no effort to assist their new comrades, or help them to feel that they are among good fellows; and there are many cases on record of gross ill-treatment of new-comers by other troopers: a survival, as I have said, of schoolboy bullying.

The first steps of actual training, however, are by no means so harsh as those through which I was put in the British Cavalry many years ago. There the rough-riding staff took the greatest pleasure in choosing the roughest horse they could find, and on this I was turned loose in the riding-school, with a bees-waxed saddle and no stirrups. The result of this is extreme nervousness on the part of recruit and horse. The German Cavalry cannot afford treatment of that kind until they have their recruit well in hand. The easiest horse of the squadron is chosen for him; the stirrups are carefully fitted, and he is allowed to amuse himself in the drill-ground or riding-school until such time as he is quite comfortable in the society of the wild animal.

By degrees the new-comers are brought together in some sort of order, and training begins in earnest, each day marking a little more severity. In a few days they are in the riding-school, bumping round and round on horses carrying no other equipment than a blanket. Here the non-com. begins to

shine. It was my business, in my particular squadron, to train the recruits in everything, and I was entirely responsible for their fitness or unfitness. To this end I never allowed my sergeants to use a whip. The horses know their business well enough; and the dull, plodding German labourer can more easily be taught if he is not scared. But you cannot stop a sergeant's tongue, and some of the remarks I have heard were as piquant as those of the traditional British sergeant. One of my recruits, a Jew, was touring round the riding-school, with every expression, in face and limb, of extreme despair, clasping the horse's neck in what looked like a death-grip. The sergeant, a very solemn East Prussian, looked on for some minutes, and then, without a smile, inquired—"You miserable Jew! do you fancy you are resting in Abraham's bosom?"

The results of this gradual breaking-in are, as a rule, satisfactory, and, considering the short term of service, the men make very decent horsemen. But equitation is by no means the only work to be rushed through; and the training of the recruit is, in fact, a more terrible tax on the officers than on the men, for it must be remembered that the officer's career depends entirely on the results he is able to achieve in the training of his men, unless

he be so lucky as to win the favours of high authorities.

The subaltern's day is long and arduous. His work begins at six o'clock in the morning, usually with an hour's instruction to the recruits. The private in the German Army is expected to know pretty well as much as his superiors of military matters and technicalities. Here are a few of the scraps of knowledge that are crammed into him:

He must know the history of the Prussian Royal Family. He must know something of the history of the last war—1870-71. He must know the stations of all the Army Corps of the German Army. Of his own Army Corps he must know all the garrisons, divisions, and brigades with the names of the Generals commanding them. He must learn to recognise at once the distinctive badges of rank. He must be able to take a carbine to pieces and put it together again. He must know all the intricate detail that go to make the perfect scout—perfect, I should add, in theory—and, in a word, he must know anything and everything pertaining to soldiering.

When you have tried to drill all this into the dull heads of a batch of sleepy recruits, in a stuffy barrack-room on a dark winter's morning, you will understand why the subaltern is tired before the

day really begins, and where he acquired that wonderful capacity for sleeping while standing.

It has been my lot to train recruits in both the English and the German Armies, and in my experience the English recruit may be trained in at least half the time required for the German conscript. Of course, Tommy does not have so much theoretical knowledge crammed into him, but, that apart, the British working-lad is infinitely sharper, intellectually, and much quicker in the up-take. Because the German is slow and plodding, it does not follow, as so many people argue, thinking of that tortoise story, that he is *more* thorough. He isn't.

The subaltern, indeed, has hardly enough time before Easter to drill into his men everything they are required to know. Another difficulty besets him, and that is the difficulty of language. It has happened to me, for two years running, to have recruits from Lorraine who knew no German. The life of a French-speaking soldier in the German Army is a peculiarly unpleasant one, and it is made doubly unpleasant for him by his slowness in acquiring knowledge of his duties. And double work falls on the subaltern in that he must hold a special class of one, and go over the whole instruction again in French.

This hour of barrack-room instruction is followed by three or four hours in the riding-school, and the recruit is then allowed to have his midday dinner. This formerly consisted only of soup, but for the last fifteen years or so meat has been added to the daily diet. Officers are not supposed to want anything to eat in the middle of the day, and two further hours are consequently devoted by the subaltern to the riding-school, where he may have to break in remounts or teach all manner of high-school tricks to a troop-charger. Between this event and the next a breathing-space of half an hour is allowed. The afternoon is taken up by foot-drill, sword and lance exercises, gymnastics, and the practice of the peculiar Prussian parade-step, ungainly in itself, and ludicrous when performed by cavalry in high boots.

In the evening, there is still no rest; for the officers in a large garrison are compelled to attend many social functions, which, in Germany, are as strenuous as military work. Balls are always in progress, and the cavalry subaltern is expected to dance everything. At one of these dances, a young friend of mine who had really been doing his duty extraordinarily well in this matter, dropped out for a while, to snatch a moment's respite. His Colonel spotted him, summoned him to the middle

of the room, and lectured him for neglecting his duties, adding that he was not there for his own amusement.

Further, the social life of a garrison town is, in our English phrase, "very wet." Among officers strict sobriety is not insisted upon. This, of course, produces the usual "morning after" effects, and adds to the suffering of the unfortunate recruits. Of late years a temperance movement has been making considerable headway in the Army; but it cannot be said that the teetotal officers were any more suave in their tempers than those who indulged.

Speaking of camaraderie, one of the most notable differences between the Armies of Germany and Great Britain is the lack of good-fellowship between officers of high and low rank, and between non-coms. and men. One may explain this by the fact that the German officer has simply no time to devote to those sports and pastimes which bring men and officers together in the British regiments. The long days in India are pleasantly whiled away by regimental football, cricket matches, and the evenings by dramatic performances, sing-songs, etc. The only occasion, in the German Army, that brings men and officers together is the Emperor's birthday. On this auspicious day the men assemble

at some restaurant or tavern in the town, and indulge in beer and folk-song, and also those other songs, comparable in spirit with those songs of the British Army which have never yet been written down, and never could be: e.g. "Who's that knocking at the door?" "A German Officer crossing the Rhine," and so on. This function is attended, for an hour or so, by officers of the regiment, and dutiful cheers are sometimes given for the squadron commander when insisted upon by the sergeant-major.

Another reason for the lack of camaraderie is that the men are not, like the British Tommy, professional soldiers, but are birds of passage, serving only two or three years, and longing to be free. You will even find, on stable doors and elsewhere in the barracks, chalked inscriptions stating the number of days between soldiering and freedom. I can quite conceive, however, that a certain latent camaraderie or *esprit de corps* would come out very strongly between officers and men in battle, successful battle; though what would happen in the event of continual reverses has not, at the time of writing, been proved.

On the whole, the subaltern of a German Cavalry Squadron has an infinitely harder life than his British equal, though perhaps the expenses of the

German officer's life are not so heavy as in England. More and more demands are made on his efficiency every year, and this leads superior officers to show their zeal by inventing unnecessary work. All work has to be accounted for in writing, and a long list of work done by each squadron must be sent in each day to the commanding officer. This is what, in the British service, is described as "eye-wash." If that functionary is not impressed there is fault-finding. The results are often a thorough staleness among the junior officers, a growing irritability is transferred to the non-coms., and this is passed on to the men under their charge in the form of brutality.

The officer who, with the utmost zeal and enthusiasm for his job, fails to win through and impress his seniors, usually ends, through sheer anxiety and over-study, in the sanatorium. His services are then dispensed with, for the German Army has no use for any weapons but those of the finest-tempered steel. Efficiency, Efficiency, always Efficiency has been its motto. Whether it is a motto by which to guide the lives of millions and the destinies of an Empire will be shown within the next few months.

## THE TRAINING OF RECRUITS
(*continued*)

WE have already seen how the young subaltern spends his summer months. This training of recruits is his winter work, and it is the more strenuous in that the men must be ready for incorporation into the squadron by Easter. I have mentioned the heavy and extra labour that falls on the officer in the case of recruits from Alsace or Lorraine, who speak only French; but for all nerve-racking ordeals give me the training of the recruit from Prussian Poland. The mule, compared with this creature, is a willing and obliging animal. In fact, the Polish recruit is a problem which has never yet been solved.

In spite—or, perhaps, in consequence of—years of severe oppression, the Poles are extremely prolific. They increase and multiply like rabbits, and batches of them come every year for their military service. Now when a Pole has made up his mind that he cannot understand German, that he does not want to understand German, that he will not understand German, there is no power in this world

that will change him from that state of mind. In addition to this refusal to learn German he has a steadfast disinclination to learn anything about soldiering. As a result his unfortunate superiors can only have recourse to one method—increased brutality—by means of which, of course, even less work is exacted from him than before. This is much to be deplored, because the Poles, when properly treated, and when well disposed toward matters, are excellent fellows, clever and useful. But they quite fail to agree, or to make any approaches at agreement, with their kindred, the half-Slavs of Prussia; and in view of the Czar's recent decision to re-establish the autonomy of Poland, Prussia may now be said to have the enemy at her gates, indeed, in the very ranks of the Army itself.

A certain amount of interest is taken in the young recruit, before he is called upon for his service, in the shape of arousing him, by methods that will engage his interest, to the great work that lies before him. As the friends of the Army have so often pointed out, everything possible must be done to raise the health of the town population, which, to-day, is the backbone of the military service; and this, chiefly, to enable more soldiers to be added to the Army, but, in a secondary

degree, to aid the general health of town life by bringing military efficiency into its atmosphere. Nothing, says Bernhardi, so promotes unity of spirit and sentiment like the comradeship of military service. I saw a good deal myself of military service in Germany, but very little of unity of spirit and sentiment!

Enormous efforts are being made, not only in the Army, but among the industrial population, to fight alcoholism. Factory work is held to deteriorate the physical standard of the nation, and, because of its monotonous nature, to impair the mental faculties and the general conditions of life. Proposals were made for reducing the hours of labour and for the relentless taxation of all kinds of alcoholic liquors, and for limiting their sale, but they received very little encouragement. Again, attempts in other directions were made to lure the young men of the towns away from the pleasures which town life affords. In some cases pious-minded officers have even gone to the length of forming schools, gymnasia, etc., for military exercise, for the use of lads who are in that dangerous stage between school and the age for service. Field-Marshal von der Goltz has started some undertaking of the kind, but what success it has met with I cannot say.

There is one curious thing that may strike the English tourist if he be visiting a garrison town, and that is that he may often, when passing barracks, hear the lusty voices of German recruits or reserves bawling his own National Anthem—"God Save the King!" But if he listens carefully he will hear that the words are German and not a German translation of our words. The German Army has its own words for this air, and it uses the melody because it claims ownership in it. It is their belief that our anthem was written by a German; therefore it is theirs to do as they like with.

The German soldier is a great singer, or rather, shouter of lusty songs of a simple kind. He loves those expressing elementary emotion, the sentiment in which usually runs to the treacly. The melodies, too, are harsh and bald, but they sound rather well when shouted in a *bierhalle* by leathern throats and accompanied by the banging of Munich mugs on tables.

I have heard a good deal in other countries of the extraordinary stratagems to which the young German has recourse in order to avoid his three years' service. I have heard stories of youngsters cutting off their trigger fingers, of laming their feet, and otherwise maltreating themselves in such

a way as to be unfit for soldiering. This, however, is mostly nonsense. But there are means by which service may be escaped; mostly in the direction of favouritism or influence. Universal service is the rigid law in Germany, but as they have many more recruits each year than they can possibly deal with, it is not difficult to get exemption on the very flimsiest pretext—that is, if you have people in the right quarters. With sufficient influence a temporary weakness of the heart or a slight defect in teeth will probably achieve the result. But there is really very little shirking.

I remember one year when we had a batch of very stubborn recruits, mostly Poles and Alsatians. It was just at that time that certain arm-chair critics of the Army, which in Germany are numbered by thousands, were exciting themselves over the question of diet. Could, or could not, the professors argued, the soldier exist on one form of food only? They thought he could. They then thought to experiment, and as we had no particular use, in the military sense, for the recruits of that year, they were set aside for the experiment. SUGAR was the magic potion that was to make the German Army the envy and wonder of the world, conquering where others failed from lack of supplies; unconquered where others fell by the

wayside. SUGAR! cried the scientists and the physical-culture experts. Is the soldier thirsty? Give him a little sugar. Is the soldier hungry? Give him a little sugar. Is the soldier not well? Give him a little sugar. Is the soldier bad-tempered? Give him quite a lot of sugar. Sugar, they said, was the staff of life, the essential of all food and drink. So when the unfortunate recruits felt like a tasty portion of sausage, they gave him sugar. When he felt like beer, a lot of beer, they gave him sugar.

I watched the men before and after the experiment, and can testify that, sullen as they normally were, this, the unkindest cut of all, aroused them to really wonderful flights of sustained eloquence. A man who can swear well in Polish can hold his own in any part of the world. But it says much for their powers of endurance that they came through the ordeal successfully, though the benevolent professors' scheme was not taken up by Berlin. Crank ideas of this kind are always being forced on the Army; and now it is this division and now that which is the victim of the experiment.

In this connection it is curious to note the effect of national drinks on the national soldiery. The Frenchman, who drinks absinthe, reflects the nature of that spirit in his military *élan*. He is vola-

tile, furious, splendid in the attack; uncertain in defence. The German, who confines himself to beer or schnapps, is more tightly knit, even phlegmatic. I was much amused to observe how the recruits, during their years of service and drill, retained their waists; and how, on being drafted to the reserve and returning to sedentary work in offices, at the same time continuing their beer-drinking, their waists gradually disappeared. On returning to reserve, after a year of no exercise and much beer, their struggles to get into their uniform sometimes lasted for half an hour.

In addition to his love for his native lager the German soldier has a fondness almost as great as that of Tommy Atkins for tobacco. It is said by some that the defeat of the French in 1870 was due chiefly to the fact that the French soldiers had no tobacco, whereas, on the German side, every precaution had been taken by the clear-minded von Moltke for continuous supplies to his troops; and the soldiers actually fought with pipes in mouth. In the charge before Saarbrücken the Hussars dashed into the historic encounter with cigars in their mouths, and through the hail of bullets they went, calmly sucking at the weed, and hacking their way through the French infantry. The Uhlan, as a rule, prefers a pipe, not a briar pipe

such as we use, but a large German pipe capable of holding an ounce of tobacco at one fill.

Cigars—German cigars—are also a great favourite of the men. Cigarettes are not so popular in the ranks. A pleasant story, in connection with the cigar, is told of Bismarck, who was almost a slave to the habit, and one hopes it is true. It may be added that he tells it himself:—

> "At Königgratz I had but one cigar remaining in my pocket, which I cherished carefully during the whole of the battle as a miser guards his treasure. I did not feel justified in using it. I painted in glowing colours in my mind the happy hour when I should enjoy it after the victory. But I had miscalculated my chances. A poor dragoon lay helpless, with both arms crushed, murmuring for something to refresh him. I felt in my pockets and found that I had only gold, which would have been useless to him. But stay—I had still my treasured cigar. I lighted it for him, and placed it between his teeth. You should have seen the poor fellow's grateful smile. I never enjoyed a cigar so much as that one which I never smoked."

Another habit which is more prevalent in the German ranks than in other armies is that of snuff-

taking. Pretty well every private and most of the non-coms. carry their snuff-boxes with them. There are often occasions during manœuvres, or route-marching, or drill, when it is impossible to light up pipes or cigars; and then a surreptitious pinch of snuff may give considerable solace. The habit has probably become popular in the Army owing to the great von Moltke's addiction to it. During the week of Sedan, he consumed over a pound of the brown powder; and at the moment of the capitulation of the Emperor he was emptying pinches into his nose as fast as his fingers could move.

In my time it was mostly schnapps that was drunk. It is prepared from corn or potatoes and is largely consumed in East Prussia, where the raw climate requires a stimulant of that kind. As agriculture decreased and population increased in the towns, there sprang up a doubled and trebled demand for schnapps which led to the production of a much inferior article. This stuff, I find, has an extremely bad effect on the non-com. in every way, since he regards it as the swagger thing to drink schnapps instead of beer, but does not hesitate to consume the same quantity. It was the custom in my regiment, and I believe in most others, that the junior subaltern of the squadron should

be ready to produce a glass of schnapps at any moment during squadron training. In fact, it was regarded as one of his principal duties to carry it with him; and I still have at home a German ordnance map soaked in schnapps.

On one occasion, when we were stationed at Strasburg, some infantry officers drove across in a sledge to Kehl in Baden. There is, at Strasburg, an octroi, and this gave the officers furiously to think, for they desired, on returning, to bring with them a nice supply of Kirsch. They hit on a capital notion of introducing the spirit without payment of duty. At the hotel they borrowed a foot-warmer and filled it with schnapps, and placed it in the sledge, while they took a stirrup-cup. Out to the sledge went the attentive Kellner, felt the foot-warmer, found it cold, took it in, emptied it, and filled it with hot water and replaced it, very cosily, in the sledge. The scene in the officers' quarters, when they prepared for their little orgy, was not edifying.

But I think to-day the Army is a little more serious, at least, in the matter of drink, and when drinking is done, it is done more ceremonially and on a larger scale. The bands, however, still retain their old reputation in this matter.

The bands are taken from those who have served

their regular three years with the ranks, and are then desirous of entering the army as musicians. The regimental bands are officially quite insignificant affairs, consisting of two trumpeters per squadron and a trumpet-major; and the most that they can do is to make a loud and cheerful noise: nothing vulgar, just something that can be heard about three miles away.

The regimental bands as they are, however, are very impressive concerns, and really are bands. In each regiment exists a band fund, which is used for the purchase of instruments and also to enable inducements to be offered to outside musicians. There is a good deal of rivalry between regimental bands, and when a regiment finds that its band begins to be in request, it puts itself to some trouble to engage good musicians. In order to boom it, it will sometimes hire musicians or bandsmen from other regiments, and will encourage the band to work for its living, and accept engagements anywhere and everywhere, in the same way as British Army bands. Usually, one finds that the best-dressed band gets most engagements, for, although Germany is a musical nation, it is still fond of pretty clothes, and as the audience talks all the time the music is playing it does not really matter whether the performance is excellent or the

reverse. Many bands, such as the Hussars, spend nearly their whole time moving from place to place, fulfilling engagements.

In the matter of courts-martial, the system obtaining in the German military is slightly different from that obtaining in the British Army.

In the case of minor offences, these are dealt with by the squadron or company commanders. More serious matters go to the Colonel, and are investigated by the adjutant, who holds a kind of Court of Inquiry. This has to be attended by an officer of the regiment concerned, who will see fair play. Statements by prisoner and witnesses are then taken down, and the Colonel decides on the punishment, if any.

Where it is a matter of a court-martial, the prisoner is brought before one of the military auditors, a kind of military lawyer, of which there is a regular staff attached to each Army Corps. A subaltern attends the preliminary inquiry, and if the case has to go for trial, a court-martial is convened. This is composed of a number of officers, three non-commissioned officers and three privates, if the rank of the prisoner is that of private. In the case of a sergeant or an officer of rank, the privates do not appear.

The Military Auditor who conducts the prelimi-

nary Inquiry reads out the proceedings, and the court-martial then states what punishment shall be regarded as fitting the crime, if the prisoner be proved guilty. The question is then put, Whether the prisoner is Guilty or Not Guilty.

Those of the lowest rank answer first, and so on, in progression, and the privates usually look extremely uncomfortable, even sheepish, when called upon to decide; as a rule they are given a lead by the President of the Court as to what he thinks to be the proper line to take. I remember once attending an Inquiry in the capacity of officer to see fair play. A young Uhlan was being tried for some offence, and the military auditor charged the prisoner:

"On such-and-such a day you committed such-and-such an offence?" And to his clerk—"Write that down!"

"But," pleaded the Uhlan, "I didn't. I wasn't there!"

"But you must have done it," retorted the auditor. "There it is, in black and white!"

I thereupon stopped the proceedings; but a new Court of Inquiry was convened, and I was not invited to attend. Perhaps my ideas of fair play were too fine.

The German officer is not, as are the British

and French officers, the confidants of their men. As I have explained, the men are but birds of passage, and it may be that they hardly have the chance to get acquainted with one another. Certainly, the officers in my experience gave the men no encouragement in this direction; and this, I think, is bad policy. The soldier likes to feel that he has someone who takes an interest in him, someone who will advise him where others cannot, and to whom he can take his troubles. There is, of course, the chaplain, but few soldiers of any nationality put much faith in these ready-to-wear confidants. They would much rather go to the sergeant, or the subaltern, in the case of difficulty about sweethearts, wives, money, and so forth.

The English non-com. is often a father to his regiment; but there is nothing of the father about his German cousin, except that he calls his men "my children" and thrashes them.

Let me conclude this chapter on elementary training by an explanation of that exercise which arouses so much wonder and derision among foreign tourists. I refer to the *Parademarsch,* or goose-step. Behind this apparently futile performance there is a serious purpose, for half an hour of this exercise does as much for the muscles of the leg and the abdomen as half a day's route-marching.

Hence, there is a great saving of time which may be devoted to becoming proficient in other branches of the noble art of militarism; and to such a materialist country as Germany, this is of considerable moment. It is, however, neither interesting to the soldier, nor impressive to the onlooker. But remember: it saves time.

## UNIFORMS AND BADGES

IN the matter of uniforms the German Army is probably more gorgeously apparelled than any other. So far as my own knowledge goes, no treatise has yet been written on the philosophy of military raiment; but I propose to repair this omission when the war is finished, by which time uniforms may have undergone a change. I shall have much to say in that volume—a kind of military "Sartor Resartus"—but at the present moment we may leave these subtle disquisitions and interest ourselves only in actual fact.

At the same time, it is an interesting theme for speculation. From time immemorial the soldier has always been arrayed in fine linen and gay plumage, and the motive of this can hardly be to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy. Rather, the enemy would be likely to say: "Here come some beautifully dressed people; they must be very fine people and obviously well-behaved, or they wouldn't dress like that."

Perhaps it is traceable to the same cause as that which leads the suburban housewife to dress her

one servant up in cap and apron and frills, in order to impress her neighbours with her wealth and her general standing. But whatever the cause, it was so from the time of Cæsar's legions to the time of the Imperial Guards. Nowadays, of course, the soldier fights in the field in uniforms of some dull tone such as shall fall into the background of the country in which he is operating. In South Africa, and again in the present campaign, the English are wearing khaki, the French are wearing a dirty blue, and the Germans are appearing in a field dress of bluey-grey.

In my time, the uniforms of the entire German Army were as resplendent as those of Napoleon's Grand Armée; and on dress occasions we had to spend literally hours in getting ready. Endless titbits and fallals had to be hung about our persons before we were fit to show ourselves. By the time we were really ready, we looked like decadent Roman emperors setting out for an orgy, and the general Christmas-tree effect can only be described by the German word *klim-bim*.

In England, the officer never attends a music-hall or restaurant in military attire, but in civilian evening dress. In Germany, a purely military country, the officer hardly dare show himself in the streets except in the dress of his rank, and never

without his sword, whether wearing dress or undress uniform.

The full-dress uniform of an officer of cavalry (except Hussars), of infantry and of artillery, is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. Silver epaulettes and sashes, and sometimes gold or silver bandoliers, are always worn, as well as those extraordinary decorations which are so plentiful in Germany, where the saying goes that no man can escape death—or the Order of the Red Eagle. I did not myself escape scatheless, but I was not so much given as some of my comrades to flaunting my decorations in the field and the street.

This thirst for decoration reminds me of a story of the late King Edward. On one of his annual visits to Marienbad, he was continually being pestered on the journey by very officious officials, and at first he was at a loss to interpret their unwelcome attentions, until it was explained to him that they all wanted decorations and that sort of thing. On the return journey, the Royal train was about to steam out of Marienbad station, when the superintendent rushed up to the King's carriage and saluted violently, whereupon the train was stopped, the official was summoned to His Majesty's presence, and duly decorated. At the conclusion of the

ceremony, Lord Marcus Beresford, who was of the party, turned to the King, inquiring:

"What did that fellow want?"

"Oh, a decoration, a ribbon."

"What did you give him?"

"I gave him the Royal Victorian Order."

"Serve him jolly well right!"

The Hussars, when fully robed, are even more beautiful than other regiments, for they wear much gold lace, busbies, with the cheery death's-head decoration on the front and plumes at the side, a samotash, and a very complicated kind of sash, which winds itself many times round the waist and across the shoulder, and is no aid to equestrianism. The full-dress of the Death's-head Hussars is, by the way, the Emperor's favourite uniform, and the one in which he is most often photographed.

The undress uniform of an officer is a plain, double-breasted frock-coat, with two buttons, a collar of the same shade as the facings, and a plain peaked cap. The Hussar, in undress, wears silver lace, instead of gold, and his general appearance is a little more restrained. As there are many possible variations of dress in the Army, there are very definite regulations, which, in themselves, demand hours and days of careful study; and as they are

subject to frequent alterations, at the Imperial will, it often happens that after the young officer has sedulously acquired a grasp of the correct dress for ten o'clock in the morning when one is making a call, and the correct dress for the same hour if one is not making a call, he will find that he has got it all wrong: it was changed two days ago, and the correct dress for ten o'clock when making a call is now the same as that for four o'clock in the afternoon when not making calls.

An amusing illustration of the significance of these dress regulations occurred some years ago, when I was in the cavalry. It appeared that a number of officers who attended the Court balls in Berlin came not so much to dance as to enjoy the really wonderful supper that was provided. This came, like everything else, to the Kaiser's ears. Whereupon, he ordained that those who wished to dance would be permitted to leave some of their gold lace, their decorations, their endless streamers of ribbon, brocade, and twisted cord behind them; others—those who only wished to sup—must appear in the very fullest dress. The result was that, at the next ball, nobody appeared in full dress; and we were treated to the spectacle of the very stoutest warriors footing it with the best of them in obedience to the Imperial behest.

This delicate custom of hinting what your guest shall wear belongs not only to the Emperor, but to people of every grade and in every social circumstance. For instance, no invitation from anyone in the official world is complete without some lead on the point of costume, which appears in the lower corner. In Germany and, indeed, on the whole of the Continent, the foolish custom of evening dress for every stupid little function, such as dinner or theatre or concert, which the English so much delight in, particularly those who like to display their small stock of distinctive clothes, is only very slightly followed. On receipt of an invitation which contains no definite instructions in the matter of apparel, you take it for granted that you may appear in your undress coat and cap instead of tunic or helmet; in the case of a civilian, it means that he may come in frock-coat and bowler hat.

In addition to orders, medals, the Iron Cross, and other decorations, the Emperor tried, some years ago, to introduce all manner of distinctive badges for proficiency in this or that department of the service. There was one for marksmanship, one for fencing, one for equitation, one for field telegraphy, one for gunnery, and so forth. They never, however, caught on either with officers or

with the rank and file; and perhaps they were unpopular because the idea was frankly borrowed from the British Army. Formerly, the only distinction of that sort was worn by the first-class shot of the entire Army, and he wore a little black and silver cord above his facings. But this new idea covered all sorts of men with pretty little toys such as crossed grenades, miniature rifles, and so forth. And these trophies were not always won by merit. In every squadron you might notice that it was always the sergeant-major who carried the highest distinction as swordsman, though he never practised swordsmanship from one year's end to the other.

## TRANSPORT AND MANŒUVRES

THE most serious question which any army has to face in modern warfare, and especially an army so colossal as that of Germany, is that of transport and supplies. It is obvious that, under the existing system, an army in close formation cannot live on the country through which its operations extend, and success can only be hoped for by continuous food and ammunition supplies from the rear.

I have said elsewhere that a machine is only as strong as its weakest part, and here, I think, we have the weakest part of this machine. If the German Army breaks down, it will not be from defective fighting force, but from lack of supplies. The Army has not, as a matter of fact, been organised for expeditions; the mass of detail regarding the amount of food and fodder which every petty little farmer and manufacturer all over the country may be called upon to provide; the lists of private owners of motor-cars; and the thousand and one intricate calculations are all based upon war on the frontiers.

Should they pass beyond these frontiers their plan has ever been to live on whichever enemy they are patronising with their attentions. This does not, of course, foresee reverses, and when they arrive . . . In this matter they have shown an extraordinary lack of adaptability in the small expeditionary campaigns such as the Chinese Expedition and the campaign in South-West Africa. Mistakes and miscalculations in the latter were of an extraordinary magnitude, and one would have thought that they would have learned from those mistakes sufficient to prevent a recurrence of the same trouble in the present war. But the unexpected check of the progress of troops at Liège threw everything in the transport column into disorder, and, though recovery was rapid, this confusion would, in the face of a considerable opposing force, have spelt immediate disaster.

Again and again our critics had pointed out ways and means, urging the necessity for the most up-to-date methods in train formations, for the assembling of telegraph corps, workmen, plate-layers, etc., to be on hand for the reconstruction of destroyed railways; and particularly was it urged that the food waggons should follow hard at the rear of the column, so that it may come up with the head of the column at the end of the march. Yet through-

out the Belgian operations the food supplies were detached from the rear of the troops and took altogether too much time to reach the head of the column; and, too, the beneficent intentions of "living on the country" were thrown hopelessly out of the sphere of practicability. This, to a certain extent, was anticipated by the army itself; for it was known that the existing arrangements of the military train were not planned for such a sudden and extensive operation. Indeed, the functions of the military train are obviously, even to the man in the street, so numerous and of such urgency that its present organisation in Germany was seen to be inadequate. And this, the most important item in any plan of war, is the only branch that is not thoroughly organised. Often, during manœuvres, I have heard murmurs of dismay run through the company when the men were told that they would have to look to the transport for supplies. This meant "living on the country," and, even in Germany itself, it was frequently difficult to find food, and if you did not find it you got none. As a rule, however, during manœuvres, the men are billeted everywhere in villages, owners of cottages being compelled to provide food and sleeping accommodation, for which they receive the sum of 7½d. per day. Even here, however, the men fared

rather hardly in hostile districts such as Alsace, Lorraine, or the Russian or Polish frontiers, since the villagers were either too poor or too surly to show hospitality. I have had many experiences of billets on the frontier in cottages where were nothing but extreme poverty and decay and no kind of decent arrangements for toilet. One might have slept with more comfort and decency in a stable. Especially hostile were the Jews, and I imagine their 7½d. a day must have shown them a good profit at the end of the manœuvres.

There is but one battalion of military train to each Army Corps. This battalion does a good deal of the field work, such as field baking and food preparation generally, and what one battalion can do, it does; but it is nevertheless a neglected branch of the service, and nothing has been done to speed things up at all. Probably one explanation of the burning and looting of Louvain, Liège, Malines, and other spots of smaller historic importance was the refusal or disinclination of the inhabitants to produce food supplies. The reconciliation of the subsequent pillage and vandalism with the claim to the leadership of culture and the salvation of mankind is a matter for the casuistry of Potsdam.

Also, the military train is an unpopular battalion

among both soldiers and officers. The disadvantages from which the officers in particular have to suffer are many, and, though a good deal of their tribulations are of their own making, nothing is done to make their lot more agreeable. On the other hand, in England, the Army Service Corps man is highly trained and efficient, is equal to any emergency, and is thoroughly respected by everybody. The officer of the same corps in Germany is practically the black sheep of the family. He does well, and he receives no credit. Or he does badly, and receives the maximum of censure. I have never in my experience heard of an officer transferring to the military train of his own free will. In nearly every case they are men who have tried all other branches, and have failed, and are given a choice between a station in the Colonies or . . . transport. As a rule they are cavalry or artillery men who could not make ends meet in their regiment, or they were so hopelessly inefficient that they were "top-hatted," i.e. requested to apply for a transfer.

One misleading point in ex-Lieut. Bilse's book "Life in a Garrison Town" is that he represents the corps he described as a regiment of cavalry. As a matter of fact, I knew well the corps which forms the central figure of his drama: it was the

16th Battalion military train stationed at Forbach, and its officers were men who were being given their last chance. They were not exactly everything he describes them; I may say that I surprised numbers of them in a state of complete sobriety—in the morning; but they were certainly undesirable neighbours, and were typical of any transport battalion. Knowing that they were looked on with scant respect and were, indeed, regarded as black sheep, they thought they might as well live up to the reputation. The magnificent flows of language which were directed on them when arriving several hours late of the column to which they were attached had not the slightest effect on them, except to urge them on to finer efforts in the same direction.

This particular little lot was condemned to a very small garrison on the frontier, and went regularly for solace to the adjoining town of Saarbrücken. There they took solace in solid and liquid form. I have often met them on the road returning, in cart-loads, to exile, full of solace. Their departures from the clubs of the town were very jovial ceremonies lasting about an hour; usually they took the form of excessive sensibility which expressed itself in tears and embraces. They had had a good time. They would not have a good

time for some long time to come. Others might have good times, but they—they were the wrecks, the cast-offs. Nobody loved them, nobody cared what became of them; therefore they took their pleasure when and where they might, and in whatever kind it presented itself. They were Military Train; they were pariahs; however much they might disgrace themselves in dissipation they could not sink lower in the estimation of their circle than they already were—Military Train.

When sober, knowing that their corps is inferior, they put on a superlative degree of side in order to impress the public and the peasantry, and all those who do not know them for what they really are, with their immense superiority. They are perhaps the worst exponents of the super-Prussian manner, the arch-bullies.

I believe, when this war is finished, and the War Cabinet is able to collect itself, the first efforts at reform will be in the direction of supplies. The whole scheme of this branch will have to be torn up and redrafted. One glaring fault is that, as it stands, it is only arranged for perfect roads on which exists no kind of check or interference.

The march of an army such as the German is, of course, a tremendous affair. Ahead of the main column are swarms of cavalry, covering the whole

of the country to be traversed. Then come larger bodies of cavalry moving along the roads. With them are the guns and the horse artillery. Then follow masses of infantry, in long columns, also on the road. Again artillery, and still more artillery. Each column must have its supply train with it, carrying supplies for a certain number of days; and these supplies must come from the last railway point. From the railways, communication with the troops must be made by traction waggons, where roads permit, or, where there are no roads, by draught animals. Then follow reserves, more infantry, more artillery, the heavy siege guns, whose wheels, of a radius of three-and-a-half feet, will ruin any road for those who follow them, and behind the guns—supplies.

All these millions have to be fed. For that purpose supplies must branch off from the main roads to whatever places may have been chosen by the various groups for their camps.

Knowing the hard-and-fast organisation of the Army—since it is a machine, it moves like a machine, and obeys the strict movement of the guiding lever which, perhaps, was set in motion by a hand that has since vanished from action—knowing this mechanical obedience to rule and precept, I can imagine the scenes that ensued when gallant Bel-

gium decided on making a bold front to the invader instead of knuckling under, as was confidently anticipated. This mighty organisation is something like the new servant, to whom certain instructions are given. Thus, "Mary, clean the steps every morning at seven!" And Mary cleans the steps every morning at seven, even though it be raining in torrents.

From what I know of the inside of things, I have reason to be sure that the transport in this case was not ready for any emergency. Progress through Belgium was expected to be a walk-over. The German troops were to make a perfectly peaceful march, obtaining from the people whatever supplies they wanted, and paying for them; and it was in everybody's mind that only the bulk of the troops at the rear would have to be fed from transport columns. For this reason, too, I imagine, the heavy siege guns had been left in the rear, with the new howitzer batteries, and, by the time the seriousness of the resistance of Liège was recognised, it was too late to fetch them up. Too, to bring up heavy batteries along lines of communication already crowded with troops would certainly have interfered even more terribly with food supplies. The long endurance of Liège, therefore, was more of a German reverse than a Belgian victory.

Had due attention been paid at headquarters to the vexed question of transport and supply, it could never have occurred, for the moment the siege guns were brought into operation the forts were silenced. It is in little points like this that the German Army shows itself as something less than it claims to be, and it is these points which give its greatest admirers cause for uneasy sleep o' nights. "Organisers of victory" are few and far between, and I fancy none of that class was present when the German Army was mobilised.

## Manœuvres

I find that a number of wrong ideas are prevalent in England regarding the manœuvres of the German Army. The arm-chair critic is loud in his condemnation of the movement of masses of men, regardless of desperate fire. He talks learnedly of the movements being carried out in brigades and divisions, in formations which are not in the least likely to present themselves in any serious campaign. Every now and then a corps manœuvre is held, and often several army corps are assembled for combined exercise under some veteran of past wars, and amazing convolutions are performed which, to the observer, seem to have no

special point except in the matter of physical exercise for men and horses.

But it must be remembered that these manœuvres are meant mainly as a test of the higher officers in the leading of large bodies of troops. The test is severe, and, by the way, not always very efficacious, for the reason that it is frequently biassed. I mean that when the Highest Authority in the Land takes part, on either one side or the other, the leader of the other side is ill-advised if he comes out victorious. An unhappy position, for, if he fails, his lot is severe criticism; if he wins—Imperial disfavour. I remember an instance where the War Lord took command of one Army, and began the issue of orders. Soon it was seen that the troops were getting into the most hopeless state of muddle. The Imperial orders had to be obeyed at all cost, and as, in this case, they happened to be wildly wrong, there was trouble. Whereupon an elderly General, presuming on his age and experience, publicly expressed his opinion of the Imperial command and the Imperial grasp of military affairs. In fact, in the London vernacular, the War Lord was "told off" by one of his Generals. What happened to the offender this deponent knoweth not.

At manœuvres every officer is given a command

higher than that to which his rank entitles him. Thus, once a year at least, every subaltern has to do a tactical exercise with a mixed body of troops, and so on, as the rank rises. A Colonel, for instance, is given a brigade, and I remember one occasion when this led to firightful disaster.

The brigadier who took command of us was a very effective instructor of equitation, and he was on his trial as brigade commander. It was my brigade which was handed over to his tender mercy for the time being. Under the eagle eye of his Emperor, however, he lost his head. . . . In a strenuous endeavour to show how wonderful and many-sided was his genius as commander, he made the fatal mistake of trying to hurry matters, and, instead of allowing plenty of time for the enormous cavalry body under him to carry out its evolutions, he gave his orders in a hustle. The climax was a furious charge, in which one squadron of the other regiment, obscured by the vast clouds of dust that the manœuvres had raised, galloped clean into the flank of my squadron. In a few seconds that cloud of dust presented, as it were, a nightmare spectacle. One saw nothing but a vast body of troops, disorganised, cut almost to pieces, and one could dimly perceive groups of rearing

horses, some riderless, dashing hither and thither in the mêlée, others, entirely beyond the control of their riders, disappearing into the beyond. I myself was riding a thoroughbred at the time, and had the good luck to get going and to get clear of the catastrophe. I remember, as I galloped, looking back, and seeing the miserable brigadier bumped this way and that in the struggle, and finally charged, from the off-side, by an excited hussar, and from the near side by a fat dragoon. It was some little time before we were completely unmixed. There were then several losses, both in horses and men, particulars of which had to be carefully secreted from the public press. The brigadier in question was presented with a top-hat and compulsorily retired.

In these days of continued straining after efficiency on the part of officers in the higher command, there is a great deal of sharp rivalry. This is chiefly directed towards ascertaining, in advance of anyone else, exactly what is likely to be the approved Imperial method at the time of any given manœuvres. This method must be followed rigidly. As Imperial methods change almost as rapidly and as inconsequently as Imperial moods, this constant change is such a severe strain on men already overworked that I have known many of those in

high commands to have frequent recourse to the syringe.

Speaking of Imperial methods, I may recall an example of military efficiency in high quarters which was recounted to me by a friend who took part in the German Expedition to China, at the time of the Boxer Rising. He told me, incidentally, that the Kaiser had addressed his brigade on parting, and that "the Imperial words were beautiful!" I have no doubt they sounded so, in Prussian ears, for they were: "Make for yourselves reputations like the Huns of Attila! Spare none!" The actual deeds of the brigade in China were less beautiful, for they there pursued the farewell exhortation to the letter. They originated the habit, which they have developed in Belgium, of firing on defenceless natives at close range, and of plundering whenever and wherever opportunity presented itself. When things were dull they would wander along the banks of the Pei-Ho, where junk-loads of Chinese proceeding down mid-stream made beautiful targets for rifle practice. Their conduct in the streets, too, was that of the strutting conqueror, and they earned the derision and contempt of all grades of men of the other Allied Forces. Such behaviour, however, helped to make up for their

inadequate transport and to throw gloss on their ill-devised equipment.

Just here was where the Imperial genius asserted itself, for the equipment of the men was so poor that when they arrived they turned out for parade in Colonial hats. Whereupon the Emperor set himself to devise a suitable helmet for his troops. This was an ordinary military helmet, but with long guards back and front, fitted with hinges. It could thus be raised from the front, like the vizor of a knight's armour, so that when the soldier was stretched on his face, he could lie perfectly flat, without removing the helmet. You just lifted the flap, and there you were. In fact, you were there very much, for though the helmet was of dark texture, its front was decorated with an enormous brass eagle, which, when it caught the sun, flashed almost as wide and far as a heliograph, and gave the enemy a splendid idea of their opponents' position! That was the last occasion when shining armour was employed, and other means were devised whereby the army of the world could make a fierce and martial appearance.

The final march-past of the Allies, after the rebellion had been suppressed, must have been a thing of beauty so far as the German force was concerned. There were the business-like little Japs,

about whose conduct and general bearing there can be but one opinion, and that of the most favourable. There were the French, with their swinging stride, and their air of alert nonchalance. Then came the tough little Ghoorkas; then a corps of Bengal Lancers. Great cheers from the Chinese onlookers met each of these detachments as they passed. And then, the ponderous stamping of the Kaiser's troops, with their *parademarsch,* was turned on in all its glory; and their reception was but bitter smiles and subdued noises of contempt.

Much criticism has been levelled in the English press at German gunnery and marksmanship, but personally I never found this to be at all bad. The artillery especially were excellent. They would get the range in five seconds, and send the shells showering into the attacked position with perfect accuracy. The fire discipline of the 9th Infantry, too, was splendid.

Another point that seems to have puzzled the general reader is the attack in close formation of dense bodies of infantry; from which they have drawn the conclusion that the German soldier is not trained to dig himself in and conduct a lengthy action. But this is a complete mistake. One of the most important features of the military training is in the direction of entrenchment, though, in the

case of the Belgian operations, it is obvious that there was no time for tactics such as these, and the results desired had to be aimed at by the old methods of heavy masses and dense formation. It is interesting to note that this formation followed pretty well the model of formations in the days of Frederick the Great: namely, that the non-coms. are placed behind the attacking lines, no doubt in order to encourage the men to vigorous assault in the suave Prussian manner.

Reconnoitring, in my time, was carried out very casually, at manœuvres. Nobody bothered much, for they were free from observation, and, anyway, it was only manœuvres. Usually, a cavalry subaltern would be sent off with a handful of troopers as a reconnoitring patrol. The messages that he sent were seldom of any value, for I have often known him to get into positions where he would have been worse than useless in war-time. Often he would ride almost into the opponent's columns, to see what was going on—a method that would hardly commend itself to the true leader in actual warfare. His subsequent value as a source of information would be likely to be a little impaired in such a situation! Another quaint habit of these patrols was to get into touch with the patrols of the opposing force, and exchange notes and information. I have

known patrols to meet out in the country, between two forces manœuvring against each other, and the subalterns in charge would sit down comfortably under the shade of a pleasant tree, and talk about old times, and each would give his own show away. Each would then send his messengers to headquarters with the information he had received, and both would laugh heartily at the situation. This, of course, might help the leader of the forces at the moment, but one would hardly recommend it as a model form of procedure in warfare, or as a useful education to the patrol officers concerned. It is—one may mention as a minor point—distinctly dishonest; but that does not count so much in an institution where "cribbing" begins at school, continues in college, and goes on throughout all Army exams. Further, it encourages the men forming the patrol—who, of course, are witnesses of everything—to dishonesty on their own part. In fact, manœuvres of any kind are compact of conduct of this kind. Thus, if a sergeant is in charge of a reconnoitring patrol, and happens to fall in with a private of the other side, he will promptly proceed to bully all the information out of him that he may require. Necessarily, all this lends an additional air of unreality and inutility to what is already known as sham fighting.

During the last month or so the ordinary news-

paper reader has been chewing over a number of military phrases such as those just mentioned: "close formation," "massed attack," and that beautiful and mystic word, "mobilisation," and inflicting them upon his travelling companions in the morning train. For those who would like to talk of mobilising, but are too wary to do so without full knowledge, I may explain that to mobilise an army means to prepare it for fighting by bringing it up to full war strength in men, ammunition, stores, horses, and so forth, and getting it on the move. Thus, a field battery has, in times of peace, only two-thirds of its requisite staff of men and horses, and in other respects the force is imperfect for active service.

The German Army has, perhaps, the most perfect machinery in the world for swift and accurate mobilisation of its forces for the reason that everything is, literally, in preparation at all times for war. No declaration of hostilities could ever take Germany by surprise. Berlin, at any rate, is always on a war footing, and every step made by the War Cabinet is a further step in the direction of preparation for war. Of them it can truly be said that they are always ready, down to the last button on the soldier's spats; save, as I have shown, in the matter of transport columns. Thus, all baggage is kept ready packed, each officer's little portmanteau

is waiting to be snatched up at the moment when hostilities are declared. Saddle-bags, and so forth, are always ready for a journey to anywhere, and even the waggons are loaded up. The method is slightly different, and less feverish in the British Army, I believe; but then, England has not three frontiers to guard.

Each division of the German Army knows exactly where it will have to go at any given moment, or perhaps I should say the commanders know, since all plans in this direction are changed every year, so that no one but the highest in command will know to which particular frontier any given force will go. Some may have instructions, that, in the event of a declaration of war, their destination is the Russian frontier, or the French frontier.

No instructions are given at such a moment. All that comes is a telegram to the commanding officer, containing the magic word *Kriegs-Mobil.* That word sets the whole machinery in motion. Each squadron is immediately ordered to fall in, and is marched up to its Stores, where every man has a little compartment of his own, whence he takes saddle and bags completely packed, new clothing, new boots, in fact, everything new even to a new lance-pennant. Saddlery alone is not renewed. All the recruits of the regiment are handed over at

once to the reserve squadron, which, in its turn, when they are trained, hands them to others.

The Colonel, too, is busy in other ways with telephone and telegraph, and orderlies have the time of their lives with official despatches. A few officers may be on leave, or away at the moment the great message arrives, and they must be summoned with all speed. The register of the reserve men is inspected, and wires by the hundred are sent out, calling the men to the regiment to which they are attached. These wires will carry them over the entire Empire, since all railways are Government-controlled. Then, at lightning speed, every man in the squadron is medically examined, and entrained.

It was even so in the War of 1870—and that was forty years ago. It was admitted then that the mobilisation of the Army, on the declaration of war, was a marvel of celerity and accuracy. The plan which had originally been formed for the purpose of placing a maximum number of men under arms at any given moment, had been corrected from day to day. If a new railway or a branch line had been constructed or opened, the time-tables had to make allowances for facilities for transport. Maps of France, in the care of the German War Office, even had roads marked down which had not yet appeared on maps officially issued in France.

Whatever was wanted had been foreseen. On July 15th, the orders already detailed by von Moltke were put at once into action. Each Army Corps had received its special instructions, well in advance, and so, stage by stage, swiftly and methodically, the Army for the frontier was made ready. The exact number of men demanded were called up from the reserve and the landwehr; the exact number of horses were called up or seized. At that moment, von Moltke had nothing to do but to give himself to the planning of the campaign; all other bothers were removed from him by his wonderful prearrangements. Within a few days the Army was ready and had been transported—men, guns, carriages, horses, food, ammunition, medical corps, field telegraphy apparatus—and every detail of the plan that had been laid six years before was carried out to the letter without a slip of any kind. Three hundred thousand men were landed at specified positions on specified days. Mobilisation is, indeed, one of the most marvellous of the many functions of this great machine. No other nation in the world has ever performed this extremely hazardous operation—as Germany has done more than once—without disaster, confusion, or miscalculation.

I had but one experience of mobilisation while in

the German Army, and that was some years ago, shortly before the South African War, when a war scare burst over Western Europe. I forget exactly how it began, but I think someone in the French Chamber had called William II a liar or something equally flattering. Berlin flashed across to us one word—*Kriegs-Mobil.* Within a few minutes, we found ourselves mobilising and entraining; within two hours of the receipt of that wire we were on the French frontier. On that particular occasion, before starting, several subalterns of the regiment were sent for by the Chief of Staff of the Army Corps, and presented with a French ordnance map, on which were marked in red ink, certain positions, railway junctions, bridges, and so forth, that must be destroyed. A quantity of dynamite, in the use of which we had, of course, been trained, was carried with us, and so, in advance of the main column, and in patrols of varying strength, in most cases consisting of twenty lances, we set out for France. This was pioneer work, of course, and a pleasant little touch was added to our departure by the Chief of Staff coming forward, and shaking hands genially with each of us, remarking at the same time: "Well, I shan't see *you* any more!"

It happened, however, in this case that, like the brave old Duke of York, we only marched our men

up the hill, and marched them down again; for a rushed message came to us, cancelling orders, and recalling us. So we returned from France, and arrived back at the garrison in time for dinner.

## GENERAL STAFF

THE cream of every Army is its General Staff, and promotions to higher command in the German Army are almost invariably given to men who have passed through the *Kriegsacademie,* which occupies the position of the British Staff College. Attached to this is a terrifically stiff examination, and only by long "swatting" and deadly concentration on his work can the young man hope to win through. It is not, however, essential that he should qualify in everything. A man may, for example, fail dismally in mathematics, or send up a weak paper in French or English. But if he can work out and write a good strategical scheme, on any material that may be given him, he will probably get in purely on the strength of that achievement; the idea of the examination being, not so much to find out exactly how extensive is a man's knowledge as to test his concentration and constructive power. Other things, in which he may be deficient, can be taught him, if he has a bent that way, since these two qualities are all-important in the German Army.

The most outstanding merit of the General Staff training is that the authorities behind it have a very sure eye for a man's leading qualifications and a very sure and successful way of making the most of him. Which, after all, is the secret of all leadership of men.

Once in the *Kriegsacademie,* the officers are not allowed to rest; indeed, they are more terribly overworked than before the exam. This is meant as a test of endurance. It is popularly said that a member of the General Staff may always be recognised: a man who has gone through that mill never looks happy again! His face has a strained appearance which all the years of success will never remove. It used to be a byword among the cadets, if we passed a miserable man in the streets of the Garrison: "Ha! He has passed the Academy exam.!"

To my thinking all this training, perfectly worked-out as it is, is considerably overdone, for it tends to sap a man's physical and mental vitality at a time when he is just in his full flower. It seems to me that they might as well let the training go a little slower in order to develop the imaginative powers, for the lack of which, in actual warfare, no amount of scientific training can compensate. The result very often is, as I have said, drugs, and,

eventually, the sanatoria, where you will find men of thirty who are literally nervous wrecks.

With all this, it is a matter for surprise how large a percentage of cavalry officers qualify for the *Academie* career. The less fortunate fellows have to continue working for their regiments, and during their period of service as subalterns, they pass through many courses of training. They receive only three weeks leave in the year, and one of these is usually stolen by a superior, who forgets to return it. There is, for instance, for the cavalry man, the higher Riding School at Hanover, where *haute école* in its most exalted form is practised and taught. Then again, there is the Gymnasium at Berlin, and the School of Telegraphy, at all of which the cavalry officer may strive to increase his efficiency. Once a year, too, the subaltern is compelled to write a treatise on a subject set for him by the Colonel commanding the regiment.

I remember that at one of these annual treats, I had to draw a comparison between the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava and that of Bredow's Brigade at Mars-la-Tour. I discovered in my treatise so many new and unauthenticated facts which redounded to the credit of my country, and so much impressed the Major with my skill that

he handed it on, instead of putting it in the waste-paper basket. It went to the Brigadier, and he was minded to show it to the Army Corps Commander, in which case, I should have stood an excellent chance of being admitted to the Staff College without further examination.

Yet another side of the cavalryman's activities is the pioneer course, for the summer. This consists of constructing bridges—bridges, I may remark, on which our troops were very loth to trust their precious bodies—and, when constructed, of blowing them up again with dynamite. This was one of my favourite pastimes. All pioneer work is carried out under the superintendence of an Officer of Pioneers, and, in his company, we not only built and destroyed bridges, but constructed railways, and were taught how to destroy inconvenient lines and how to break up the points. On all these matters the cavalry officer must be thoroughly informed, even to knowing how to drive a train. During this work we were entrusted with a small light engine, and on any summer's day near a German garrison you may see these engines parading up and down the lines, with a party of five or six subalterns hanging to the footplate and wooing melody from the throat of the engine's whistle.

Then, still more work. He has to go through a

period of training with another arm; and it is considered just as much a joke to see an infantry officer riding in front of a troop of cavalry, as to see a cavalry officer struggling with the infantry *parade-marsch.*

If, after all this, the officer is not a perfect soldier, then the Empire has no use for him. He may pack up his bag and go home to mother, or to a Colonial appointment.

## THE SECRET SERVICE

PERHAPS the most wonderfully organised of all machines of attack and defence in Germany is the Secret Service. More nonsense has, I suppose, been written about the spy than about any other type of villain. We meet him in sensational novels, in the political novel, in transpontine melodrama, in drawing-room melodrama. He is alternately a crafty ruffian in sweeping hat and long cloak, with thin lips and beady eyes; or he is the polished, perfectly-groomed man of the world, moving with the best people, rubbing shoulders with ambassadors, kissing the finger-tips of duchesses of irreproachable integrity. Or, again, it is a lady; sometimes the flaming-haired adventuress, with rouged lips, addicted to *crème de menthe,* cigarettes, and perhaps drugs; and sometimes the *dame galante.* But the real article is rather of the penny plain than the twopence coloured variety.

Said General Radowich: "To give one's country the advantages of a secret service of espionage is not *spending* money; it constitutes, rather, the best investment there is." So Germany spends annually

£780,000 in the maintenance of a corps of spies, ranging from the highly-placed functionary to the obscure workman in the factory. These operate in Russia, France, England, and the United States; and . . . they are not all Germans. The Secret Service of Potsdam has all nationalities in its pay: American, Belgian, Swiss, and wastrels from the submerged corners of Europe.

It happens that I could disclose many interesting facts in connection with this vast web of intrigue, but, for obvious reasons, there would be little point in doing so, now that the whole system has become so much exposed in England and France since the outbreak of hostilities.

I recall, however, one interesting personal experience. When in Burmah, in 1892, I made the acquaintance of an interesting specimen of the non-moral German soldier. I was told that we had a German soldier in the ranks of the garrison artillery, and as I was able to talk to him in German about his native country I saw a good deal of him and gradually got his story.

He was drawn, as a recruit, into a regiment of infantry stationed at Wesel. He left it suddenly one night, after half killing the sergeant-major with a sword-bayonet, by way of protest against this officer's appropriation of his best girl. He flitted

to Holland; thence to England; and so back to France. Here he was recognised as a deserter from the German Army, and was taken into the French Foreign Legion. He went, with a detachment, to Cochin, but, by some means which he did not disclose, managed to get away once more. Indeed, I have a notion that he was Eugene Vidocq redivivus. Eventually, after some lapse of time, he turned up at Singapore and enlisted in the British Army. When I met him his rank was that of bombardier; and on my departure I saw him for the last time, for yet again he slipped away for Paris, this time taking with him the plans of the Burmah coast fortifications and the wife of his best friend, also German.

The Secret Service is divided into several sections, according to the matters covered—naval, military, commercial, diplomatic, etc. An important point that the English people have overlooked is that *every German* of any ability is an unofficial spy; for the principle maintained is that it is every man's duty to report to his home authorities anything about foreign affairs which comes to his ears or which may be of use to his own country.

Tortuous methods have to be employed in this branch, both in the acquiring of information, in its conveyance to the right quarter, and in the payment of the informer. The salary of an official spy

is between £10 and £20 per month. Often the spy is financed in some innocent-seeming business—a shop or commercial agency, or, in the case of a woman, she is financed in the matter of the upkeep of an establishment of a less innocent kind. The money is sent by hand, usually by a woman-courier, who pays the controller of any special section, leaving him, in his turn, to pay his subordinates. Reports are passed at the same time; and, so little faith does the Government place in its servants, that a system of counter-espionage is in vogue to spy on spies and the couriers.

In making a report, the spy must omit nothing. He will set himself laboriously to work, perhaps, upon a young officer likely to have important means of obtaining confidential plans. No one is too insignificant for the spy; no detail too trivial. Before long he will have his man docketed, and the docket forwarded by hand to headquarters. In that docket will be found the full biography of the subject up to date: his birth, his education, his family, his wife and children, if any, his means, whether embarrassed or comfortable; his regiment, the commissions he holds, where he is, has been, or will be stationed, his mode of life, whether strict or extravagant, his little failings and general habits, and his chances of promotion.

This docket is then filed at headquarters, and added to, as fresh material occurs. It will come as a surprise to many to know that numbers of British officers of exalted and humble rank are thus docketed at Berlin. Their favourite and most likely subject is the young officer in distressed circumstances, or of dissipated ways; the young man of ambition whose family are unable to fit him properly to "keep his end up" in an expensive regiment.

I heard of one attempted overture in this direction not many years ago. A young lieutenant, of honourable but impoverished family, got heavily into debt and other scrapes out of which money alone could help him. In the lounge of a famous music-hall he confided this fact to a friend, hardly thinking it necessary, in so cosmopolitan a crowd, to talk in whispers. A few days later, he received a letter from a foreigner of vague nationality. It was written on note-paper of exclusive design, bearing a quietly fashionable address, and it mentioned two intimate friends of his by whom the writer introduced himself. It appeared that these friends had spoken highly of the lieutenant's abilities in military theory, and as the writer had a youthful nephew who was about to embrace arms, he desired to place him with a reliable coach. At the conclusion of the letter he mentioned, in an off-hand way,

as one apologising for mentioning the squalid matter of fees, a sum which took the young man's breath away: a sum far in excess of normal coaching fees. After a moment of temptation, the lieutenant took the letter to his colonel, and in that case the fly did not walk into the spider's parlour.

Literally, there are thousands upon thousands of spies operating in Europe on behalf of Potsdam. In France alone there are 10,000 Swiss at work in this connection; and those who wish to realise the magnitude of this espionage machinery may turn to such books as Chev. Wolheim's "Indiscretions," Zerniki's "Recollections," "Memoirs of Karl Stieber," and Burch's "Notebook."

Perhaps the most useful of all types of spy is the international courtesan, whose achievements will never be known either to-day or to-morrow, but who, in her own twisted way, helps to make the history of Europe. Lurid stories are told of the manner in which these women obtain their information; but really, the means are quite simple. She is permitted to set up a luxuriously appointed establishment, to which she invites highly placed gentlemen and exacts only a little conversation on political events of the day by way of compensation.

The Great Frederick is reported to have said that

"I have one cook and a hundred spies." To-day the position is a little broader; for since Germany has seen herself as the future apex of world-power, the courtesan is always welcomed in Berlin and other large towns, and furnished with ample funds for work in other countries. They are a curious, cosmopolitan company; mostly Parisian, though they display no national idiosyncrasy, and it would be difficult for the observer to ascribe to them any particular nationality. Often they assume a title from the old French régime to which they have no right, and Comtesse and Duchesse appear frequently in the Secret Register. They will appear "everywhere," as the phrase goes, expensively gowned and accompanied by squires of recognised social position, and may perhaps acquire a reputation for dogs, or charity, or movements for Sailors' Homes of Rest, and so forth. In Berlin they have regular meeting-places, one of which is so well known that I may without indiscretion name it: the Blumensale. I remember the case of a German I knew very well some years ago, who was for a considerable time military attaché in Paris. He had met in Berlin a lady of this persuasion who taught him French, so that he spoke perfectly and without the slightest accent. When he was ordered to Paris, she accompanied him, and, through her,

he was constantly supplied with information concerning the French army. In his case, however, he was actuated solely by patriotism and by no sordid motive of gain, since he came of an extremely wealthy family.

The spy, of course, however highly placed, is never recognised by the Government for which he or she works. In the event of an arrest, the guilty person is disowned by his Government, and left to his fate. It is curious to note how an arrest of a German spy in England is almost immediately followed by an arrest of an Englishman in Germany. To this end a corps of alleged guides is kept at work in Germany, with instructions to offer information to tourists for a price. If a deal is made, an arrest is at once effected.

Practically anyone can secure employment in the work of spying. So long as humans of a kind are cheap the utilitarian Government will buy them, make what use of them they can, and discard them when done with.

Next to the highly-placed personage comes the humbler spy, who gathers information when and where he can. Love of the Fatherland inspires the Teuton to wondrous efforts, as we have seen in the wholesale arrests of armed spies in London during the last month or so. Quiet, unpicturesque people,

whom we should never suspect of the melodramatic calling of Spy, have been brought up at Bow Street, and one has recognised among them waiters, hairdressers, hall-porters, and other folk in obscure walks of life.

This minor swarm of servants of the War Lord are men of no country, no beliefs, no morals, and no means of support. The headquarters of the regiment were, until the beginning of August, in Paris. All information from every part of Europe was centred on Paris. There it was sifted, and, if approved, passed on to Berlin. In one country at least, to my personal knowledge, the police force contains many members of this noble brotherhood. Some of them are in regular employment by the central authority; others are only rewarded with occasional douceurs according to the value of the information they impart.

Yet a lower class exists, a class of free-lances who carry information from any one country to any other—for a price. These, however, though the most despicable, are perhaps the least dangerous, for they only carry what information they think may be wanted, irrespective of facts!

One example of the workmanlike way in which Berlin goes about all matters of diplomacy is found in the police reports and the reports of the central

agents. In one of these it is suggested that four to five thousand men, capable of working as gardeners, farmers, labourers, and so forth, should be at once acquired and despatched to various countries. Only industrious workmen were called for, and those willing to work at low rates. Again, six or seven hundred reserve men were to be found, and positions obtained for them in banks, commercial offices, etc., in countries likely to be dangerous to Germany. And, delightful touch, the same report calls for seven to nine thousand female domestics for restaurants and hotels; and a similar number of pretty young girls as serving-maids in the canteens of garrisons and stations in Asia and India. In each case, situations were guaranteed by the agent-in-chief.

In the war of 1870, Germany dispatched the chief of her Secret Service bureau to France, with practically *carte blanche* in the matter of means and disbursements, to procure information on the strength, situation, and probable objective of each force of the enemy; personal details regarding their leaders; information on the feeling in towns and villages where hostilities were likely to centre; to engage such subordinates as he might desire, and to purchase such traitors as might come his way.

It is a question whether this system has had very

fruitful results for Germany, by comparison with the enormous moneys expended on it. Judging by the specimens of spy which have so far been caught in this country, one would hardly place much reliance on information coming from such a source; certainly one would hesitate a thousand times before basing plans and estimates upon it. Nevertheless, it is a sufficiently serious weapon to be of considerable danger to other countries, for a few highly-trained men and women of keen intelligence, initiative and perception, can do much good work not only in obtaining tit-bits of trustworthy fact, but also in sifting the statements of others, putting two and two together, and arriving at often surprisingly accurate conclusions.

## THE WAR LORD AND HIS ENTOURAGE

IN his already famous book, "The Men Around the Kaiser," Mr. Frederic William Wile has dissected the Court so minutely and so relentlessly that there is little to be added. His judgments of the exalted personages are fair and accurate; and if I made any comment at all it would be that while the Kaiser is no doubt strongly influenced by the men about him, he has not the gift of getting the right men. This was the great quality possessed by his grandfather; this it was that pulled Prussia through 1870.

Extraordinary misconceptions of the Kaiser exist in England, due, no doubt, to his many-sidedness and to the fact that more has been written of him than, perhaps, of any man in the world. Each critic sees a different William II, for the Kaiser himself is never certain how he shall present himself until he steps into the limelight and "senses" his audience. I know him personally to be a man of very generous impulses, likely, no doubt, to be led away by those impulses or by the enthusiasm of those about him for this or that idea.

Perhaps William I was singularly fortunate, rather than gifted, in finding men like Bismarck, Moltke, Roon, Steinmetz, and more especially in his son, the Crown Prince Frederick. Also it must be remembered that the Germans, in his day, were a single-minded race, deeply imbued with a spirit of patriotism as pure as that of the little Belgians, struggling always toward a truly high ideal of national unity. In these portentous days national unity is not so strong as it would appear. With increasing prosperity separatism has grown up between the States, and I question very much whether, for example, Bavaria to-day is as enthusiastic as of old about a United German Empire.

Also, in the earlier days, this single-mindedness led individuals forward to distinction on their merits alone. Efficiency and Efficiency only was the Open Sesame to preferment. Nowadays social life has become much more complex; and, with the developments of which I have spoken in a preceding chapter, came the emergence of a type of man who possessed push rather than ability to help him along; and His Imperial Majesty is always inclined to be dazzled by the glamour of self-confidence, even though it carry nothing with it.

When he came to the throne he was still surrounded by men who had fought their way to emi-

nence by noble work in three wars; men who had none to help them but themselves; who, by personal endeavour and force of character, had honestly earned the glory with which they were covered. To the presence of these old warriors at Court I ascribe the fact that the Empire was not long ere this launched on a great war. Is it possible that they had persistently warned him that, in the event of war, he would not be allowed to lead? Certainly I have often heard it said by veteran officers, "when Germany does go to war, we hope He will not lead us! We want to win!"

But now the last of them is gone, and their place is taken by men who are much more amenable to giving their Royal master his head, and thereby making their own position more and more comfortable. There is among them none who would question the Emperor's ability to lead this world in arms against the hosts of the next. Glamour, as I have said, more than efficiency, leads one to the sweet light that beats upon the throne, and, as a result, the fawning—let me add, skilfully fawning, for His Majesty is no child in matters of that kind—the fawning courtier is more in evidence than the warrior. In fact, there is a distinctly Byzantine tone about the whole War Cabinet which augurs little of good for the future of the world-power.

In these circumstances it is obvious that favouritism has been busy somewhere. This has been felt in the Army for some years, and has had a considerable effect in undermining the popularity of the Kaiser. The evil has not gone far enough, however, to show very decided effects in the field as yet; but it is possible that reverses might, as I have said elsewhere, fan the smouldering embers of discontent and disorganise the great machine. An additional note of discord is provided by the popularity of the Crown Prince, for it is inconceivable, at Potsdam, that more than one figure should be in the spotlight.

One feature of German official life which is not sufficiently realised outside Germany is the amazing display of independence on the part of certain exalted personages. That may sound strange to those who are accustomed to stories of the Kaiser's determination and will-power, but it is none the less true. When a German official has arrived at a certain grade he attains almost limitless licence of action, and to this fact one may trace the origin of many of those indiscretions and "incidents" which have startled the world during the last twenty years. For example, I am giving away no secret, I think, when I say that the little *affaire* which led ultimately to the Agadir incident was initiated by a German

official entirely on his own responsibility and without consultation of any other party, either above or below him. It happened, however, that he was a valuable servant, occupying high office, and the injudicious steps he then took were at once condoned and supported by the Government.

Von Holstein, too, the power behind the Foreign Minister, was responsible for a great deal of negotiation and treaty-making of which that Minister knew hardly anything until he was face to face with the *fait accompli.*

Again, I remember an instance of unusual pressure being put upon a small Balkan State, with its only coast on the Black Sea, by a German Consul-General. This functionary emphasised his demands by a threat that, unless they were immediately complied with, the German fleet would bombard one of the few seaports of the country! It says little for the intelligence of the Minister of the country that he immediately agreed and conceded all that was asked of him.

Yet another case, this time of a general, who came down from Berlin to take command of an Army Corps in South Germany. Owing to his intimate relations with His Majesty he was extremely outspoken, and never hesitated to express his views on this, that, or the other, regardless of the company

present, even were it his Royal master himself. It happened that he had been in command of a regiment of cavalry of the Guard, and one of the officers, a near relative of the War Lord, was a notoriously bad horseman. In fact, he admitted that he only felt safe on a mild-tempered horse which had been thoroughly over-worked. The general in question decided to give the Prince an opportunity to show his spirit to his brother officers, and, after dinner one night, he sent him, by his orderly, instructions to ride to a certain spot, and at once. He was to ride all night and arrive at dawn. There he would mark out a defensive position and then return to the parade-ground in time for squadron-drill, make his report, and go on with his work.

The Prince rode forth on his troop horse, managed, by some means, to follow out his instructions, and arrived back on the parade-ground, and went through his squadron training on the same horse. When drill was finished the general summoned the officers and ordered them to go over all the jumps, which, in that particular parade-ground, were very considerable. The Prince rode up to the general and asked him if he might ride a little in the rear, as, having been riding all night, the dust might hurt his eyes.

"In that case," remarked the general drily, "you had better ride in front!"

Some time afterwards the Kaiser met the commander, and, in course of conversation, inquired:

"Were you not rather hard on that relative of mine the other day?"

And met the abrupt reply: "Well . . . your Majesty gave me command of the regiment. If you dislike the way I conduct it . . . you have the remedy."

"Oh, of course, my dear friend, I meant nothing of the sort!"

The entourage of the Crown Prince is exclusively of the Junker class—men who have connections throughout the army, but principally in the line. If we examine the causes of his popularity I think we shall find them in the fact of his continued thwarting of parental instructions. For some reason the son who defies his father always attracts public sympathy; and His Highness's impatience of Imperial decrees served to endear him to the public. Also, his "blazing indiscretions," disturbing as they may be to other nations, and disastrous as the consequences might have been in some cases, were not any definite expression of his policy, or any attempt at statesmanship, but rather an indirect way of hitting the Emperor. You have a rather

flippant young man, writhing under supposed injuries, and turning himself to consider what he may do next "to annoy the old man."

Those who have met His Highness on occasion, have found him socially a delightful companion, free from Imperial "side" and eager for chat and escapade. I doubt, however, whether his popularity extends beyond Prussia. If it does, it is based solely on his pronounced Anglophobia, which, at the moment, appears sweet and proper to all Teutons. Certainly the Protestant Hohenzollerns will lose adherents in Catholic South Germany if they should be the means of bringing the horrors of war across the Rhine. It must not be forgotten that the great organisation against which even Bismarck was helpless is by no means inactive, and the powers of the Church of Rome in South Germany are still strongly directed against Protestantism; and if Protestantism, which in this case is but a thinly-veiled materialism, brings ruin and subjugation upon the Empire, it and its representatives will go before an organisation even more efficient and striking deeper than the Prussian military hierarchy, namely, the Church of Rome.

## THE WAR LORD AND HIS ENTOURAGE
(*continued*)

IT is a curious fact, but it was not until I sat down to make a few notes on the Leaders of the Army that I realised how little I knew of them; how little, indeed, anyone knows of them. Practically one may say that they and their abilities are known only to a few highly-placed officials in Berlin. Even the army and the junior officers have very little real knowledge on the subject; and this is yet another instance of that tortuous web of secrecy that incloses the activities of Berlin.

All Europe knows General French, Lord Roberts, Lord Charles Beresford, Sir Evelyn Wood, General Joffre, Lord Kitchener, their reputations and prowess. Everywhere on the Continent, and especially in Berlin, they are known, sized up and weighed; but the same cannot be said of Generals von Kluck, von Moltke, von Emmich, von Bülow, von der Goltz, or von Stein. These are dark horses, kept discreetly in the stable until the last minute before the race. If von Moltke's dictum be accurate: that no man is fitted to direct a campaign unless he have

already seen service under conditions of actual warfare, then it is difficult to see which of the leaders of the Army to-day can suitably occupy that post. Not only have they been kept in the stable for purposes of secrecy, but they have remained there so long, and their powers have been so little matched, except in morning canters, that they are probably none too fresh for the big race.

Mostly, the men in high command at Berlin are, as I have said, of a very sinister type. They have modelled themselves so long on Bismarck, von Moltke, and von Roon that they have acquired all their least admirable qualities without possessing any of the tremendous abilities that underlay them. Not only much hard work, but skill of another kind has placed them where they are; and if you scan their faces you will not find there much indication of the finer qualities or of preponderating genius.

Von Moltke is, perhaps, the darkest of these horses; but I think one would be not far wrong in saying that it is rather the honoured name that he bears, than outstanding abilities, that has brought him into high place. He has seen no active service; his knowledge of the conditions of warfare has been gained solely from textbooks and the manœuvre ground, and he has done all in his power to please his Emperor. I have already exposed the value of

those manœuvres at which the Kaiser is present, and the exhibitions of skill which both His Majesty and von Moltke have displayed have never really impressed me. The former is, of course, the nominal leader of the present campaign; but there will, it is hoped, be advice coming to him from other sources, since his experience can be of little actual value. From which direction this advice will come it is difficult to say; but the one man who really understands something of the art of war, and has had intimate personal experience, is Field-Marshal von der Goltz.

At the moment he is military Governor of the occupied portions of Belgium.

He has served fifty years in the Army, and this month celebrates his seventy-first birthday. Shortly before the declaration of war his retirement was announced, but this, of course, no longer holds.

He is chiefly known by his historic failure in remodelling the Turkish Army. In 1886 he was an officer of engineers, and the Porte, dazzled, like the rest of Europe, by the surface brilliancy of the German Army, and believing that only Prussians could properly form an army that should really be an army, hired him to reorganise their military arrangements. He remained in Turkey for nine years, at the end of which time he announced that his

work was done, and he stood back to allow the world to gaze and wonder at the new Turkish Army. The world gazed and wondered and accepted the army at its creator's valuation. But in 1912 this wonderful force marched out to meet the Bulgars, and went completely to pieces. At the very moment at which the debacle was happening von der Goltz, who knew exactly what his work was worth, and who had foreseen what would be the outcome of a contest with the less machine-like Bulgars, was busily explaining to the German Press, the Wolffs, and the Hammams, and all the rest of the inspired sources of German news, exactly how it had happened. In a word, his attitude was: "There! I told you so!" For, he said, he had never expected anything else, knowing what the Turks were. Why had all this happened? Well, because the Sultan would not let him have his own way. The Sultan, he said, wanted a police force, not an army for offensive purposes. The Sultan would not let him arrange field service training or manœuvres, and definitely forbade gun practice by infantry or artillery. It was not until 1909 that manœuvres were permitted, and three years' training was not enough. So there you are! Still anxious to throw the blame of his failure on the shoulders of others, he added that he had drawn up a very careful plan of cam-

paign before he quitted the army, but that when the leaders came to apply it they had not force or ingenuity enough to follow it.

On his return to Germany he was given a command at Königsberg, where his theories of fortification have been, in the slang phrase, "going through it" at the hands of the Russians.

Like most German military leaders, he is an incomparable theorist, a large contributor to magazines and service papers, and is regarded as the greatest military authority in the Empire.

Of the other leaders engaged I can say but little. Von Emmich seems to be a leader of intrepidity and dash, and a manager of men. Of his achievements in the present campaign, however, nothing is yet known, and will not be known until the official history comes to be written. Up to the present his finest exploit seems to have been that of committing suicide and rising from the grave ten days later to receive the sword of General Leman. How he managed to be in two places at once, not being a bird (to crib Sir Boyle Roche's deathless bull) is a matter which can only be determined by the newspaper reporters—I cannot call them war correspondents—who sent the story.

Von Hammam can hardly be said to be a leader of the Army, and yet, as its astute Press agent, he

is undoubtedly one of its heads. His record, I fear, is too well known at the moment to necessitate any remarks from me. He is known as the head of "the reptile Press." He is the man who shapes the whisper of a throne, twists it into anything that the aims of the moment may require, and presents it to the world. His reputation is distinctly unsavoury, even among Germans. The less said about him, the better.

There is one figure, however, at the head of the Army about whom one can speak with knowledge and certainty; and that is young Hotspur, the Crown Prince, of whom I have already made mention. While he is the quintessence of all that is most hatefully militarist, there is no doubt that his abilities as a soldier are considerably in excess of those of his august parent. He has inherited a double dose of his father's militarism and a double dose of his capacities. He is at the head and front of all Anglophobia and mailed-fistism. He denies to all nations the right to a soul. Small nations, especially Belgium, Poland, Holland, have no right to a soul; and he even believes that great Empires can progress without anything but crass materialism. Servia showed that she had a soul, and would fight for its existence; therefore, Servia must be crushed by Austria. Belgium and Servia have suffered ter-

ribly these last few weeks, but though their houses and their children are burning, the people themselves are burning with a pure flame that not even Prussianism can ever put out. Siege guns and the goose-step will not slay the souls of their opponents; but they will slay the souls of their adherents and those who put their trust in them. Whether the Crown Prince has evolved a philosophy of militarism, or whether he has been attracted to it by its cheaply picturesque character, cannot be determined from the outside; but from what I know of him, I should incline to the latter view.

His personality is wholly tinged with Byronism, dash, ardour. He shouts for Prussianism, but I believe that if something equally violent and picturesque were offered him he would shout still louder for that. You should see him leading a cavalry charge at manœuvres; you should see the flush on his cheek, the blood rushing in his skin as he flashes his sword and goes heart and soul for the great game!

There is no doubt that to-day he is the idol of the Army and its leaders. At one time it was thought that he was but their tool, ready to pledge himself to all manner of Chauvinism, without clearly understanding what he was at. But those days are past. He has shown that he has a will of his own,

and his friendship with Vertling and von Heydebrand does not imply that he is in any way in their hands. Tactless he is, and indiscreet, but those indiscretions are entirely his own, and not inspired from other quarters. He has always disliked the manufacturing and commercial classes, and has taken no pains to conceal his dislike, or even to refrain from expressing it. His august father, for reasons of his own, has always surrounded himself with the financial magnates and merchant princes of the Empire; but this young man will none of them.

The secret of his popularity is probably the same as that of the popularity of Alfonso of Spain—his extreme boyishness and good nature. This was instanced when, at a review of the Berlin garrison, he for the first time took the Emperor's place, and on his return was assaulted by a malcontent who hurled a tin of preserved meat at him. His composure was excellent, and terrific cheering greeted him from all sides. When, owing to the density of the crowd, his carriage was unable to make any headway, the youngster calmly alighted, smoking a cigarette, and walked on foot to the palace, with delighted crowds behind him.

The Prince is essentially the military man-about-town. He likes the theatres, the restaurants, and

the gay places where Princes really ought not to show themselves. It was amusing to follow the little games of the Crown Prince at a time when Imperial wishes were being issued to the Army for the cultivation of frugality, simplicity, and the homespun virtues.

His little indiscretions, such as that which led to his exile to Dantzic, and his sudden return to make the disturbance in the Reichstag, which so shook the European chancellories, are hardly matters of any significance. A young man leading the life which the Crown Prince was known to lead is liable to all manner of aberrations. We have seen something of the same sort in the history of our own Royal Family; and we have seen, too, what a magnificent ruler a young man of that type may become when he ascends to the throne, if he have the necessary qualities and if he find himself taken with becoming seriousness.

And the Crown Prince has those qualities. Hitherto, he has been under the rigorous suppression of his father; he has been merely a youngster who was not allowed to meddle in affairs with which, there is no doubt, he was quite competent to deal. Naturally, this would arouse any young man's resentment, and it showed itself in his general behaviour.

But, above all, it is as a soldier that the Crown Prince shines. He is, in fact, the perfect German soldier, with all his bad points and also his wonderful qualities.

## RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

FIFTEEN years ago I left the German Army never to return. I was sorry to go, for I had many pleasant years to look back upon: much hard work, perhaps, but also much unexpected kindness. The messes with which I was associated were very pleasant; and whatever the faults of the German officer may be—and he has many—he does not display them to the annoyance of his fellows at mess. On the whole, they were a cheerful set; and when I left I did so with the best wishes of my regiment, for they were, strangely enough, distinctly on the side of England in the South African struggle. This was not the case in other parts of Germany; and I think the only explanation of its existence here was that they looked with some haughtiness on the idea that a pack of armed farmers should present opposition to a trained army. It was an impertinence, in their view, and, as such, should be punished severely. I was therefore given a good send-off; and I trust that my exploits were all that my comrades expected. As, however, I did not punish severely, but only in so far as the rules

of international warfare allowed, I imagine that I should not meet with their approval if my record were known.

As I look back there is much that I remember with pleasure. There was the amazing keenness for work which is often lacking among the younger officers of other armies, and there was always a certain vicarious delight in the skill which was so often displayed on drill-ground and field. Nothing appeals to me so much as abilities, deftly handled, and the German officer will continually give you opportunities in this direction. The amazing concentration of which he is capable is a joy in itself; and the handling of vast masses of cavalry, through complicated movements, often by mere boys, is a genuine revelation of superb technique.

Indeed, were von Moltke alive to-day, I should feel a little anxious for the Allies. Such an army, with such a leader at its head, would surely accomplish wonders; for its defects, great as they are, would be remedied by that great soldier the moment they were brought to his notice. But the Army has not a leader of that calibre. One may say, indeed, that it has not a leader at all; it is badly in need of one. For there are divided counsels in the field, due, for the most part, to the strained domestic relations existing between the

Crown Prince and his father; and of these divided counsels, which to follow, which shall prevail? The Army is not so much a clay-footed idol, I fear, as an idol of which the head is clay.

On revisiting, some time after my retirement, some of my old comrades, I noticed many changes, some good, others bad. In my time, the officer was everywhere welcome—restaurants, private families, places of amusement, and so forth—his uniform alone gave him the entrée to the society of the best people. But this is not so marked now. The business of simplifying the life of the Army seems to have gone to still greater lengths since I left. Spartan diet and ways of life are being insisted upon; and, in order to keep out the wealthy man's son as much as possible, the men are not permitted to make extravagant display. Any man who sets a higher standard of living than his brother officers is promptly suppressed. In some cases, there seem to be rich youngsters, subalterns and so forth, with treble the incomes of their colonels, and these are promptly informed that there must be no display, no entertainment of a kind which it is beyond the means of his fellows to return. I heard but a month or so back of a set of officers in quite a swagger regiment who dine off cold meat and bread and butter, washed down with light wine. I even heard of

an officer in a crack regiment who neither drinks nor smokes; yet he remains popular and even has many adherents. I heard, too, that officers joining Berlin regiments are presented with a map and street guide marking out places and districts where they may not go in uniform. I learnt, in the same breath, that quick changes of mufti are always ready to hand!

I was asked, during the Boer War, when a comrade learnt that I had come from the German Army, what the life was like, adding that it must be deuced funny. "Why funny?" I asked him.

"Oh, well, you know, funny things must always be happening in an army like that. Crowd of chaps who do the goose-step all day must be beastly funny at any time, I should think."

I was sorry to disillusion him. As a matter of fact, the German soldier is not funny. When he has a turn for humour it is always of the coarsest kind, as all military humour is; and as for unintentional humour, that only shows itself as mere stupidity.

Innumerable anecdotes are related about the stupidity of the Irish recruit, but these, of course, are sheer libels. The Irish recruit is one of the swiftest fellows on the up-take that I have ever met. For dullness the Scot and the East Prussian lead easily.

I remember once telling a very glum-faced youth to telephone to the forage department for stores for the stables. I stood within earshot, and this is what I heard:

"Send down at once twenty bushels of oats and ten bales of hay. You're late. What? Who is it for? Do not be foolish; it's for the horses, of course."

On another occasion at musketry I was dealing with a lad who had come straight from an Alsatian farm. I gave the command:

"Sight for four hundred yards!"

Whereupon the youth solemnly inquired if he pulled the trigger harder for four hundred than for two hundred.

I can remember just one solitary burst of humour on the part of a non-commissioned officer. He was an extremely heavy fellow, from the Polish frontier, and to look at him you would have thought that sergeant-majors had as many Imperial burdens to bear as the Chief of Staff. One day, when the lads were feeding the horses, a pudding-faced boy walked up silently from the rear with buckets of water.

"Blockhead!" cried the sergeant—or a German word with a somewhat stronger significance—"Blockhead. Do you not know that you never

approach horses from behind without speaking first? If you take the horses by surprise you will most likely be kicked. And then we shall have lame horses for the whole squadron!"

I have spoken elsewhere of soldier songs, particularly of the rather gross examples which are afloat in every army and navy in the world. There is a famous song in the British Army, called "The German Officer," which opens:

A German officer crossing the Rhine,
Skibbow, skiboo!

The remainder cannot be printed, but it has a very effective burden in the "Skibbow, skiboo!" and a lilting tune. This song reappears in the German Army, by the simple alteration to "British officer." I was passing a *bierhalle,* one Imperial birthday night, and heard this being sung. I dropped in casually, and inquired what it was they were singing. Knowing that I was English, the leader came to attention, saluted, and tactfully replied that it was a song in praise of the Englishman who swam the channel. I thereupon sung it to him in the original!

The capacity of the German private for absorbing lager is, perhaps, one of the really "funny things" of which my friend spoke. I have seen the

men sitting about in *biergarten* and ordering Munichs or Pilseners. There they will sit, sometimes talking very loudly, sometimes in glum silence. Then, suddenly, one will stretch forth his hand, lift his long glass mug to his lips, hold it poised for a moment, then return it to the table with a bang—empty. A few moments later a full one appears before him. He will look solemnly at this for some minutes. Then, recalling himself to a sense of duty, he will suddenly snatch it from the table, hold it to his lips, and repeat the process. This goes on all through the evening. Among the students it was once a favourite custom to order pints of Munich round. Then, at the word Go, they would snatch them from the table to their mouths; and the man who could first smash his glass down to the table, quite empty, was the winner and was entitled to drink at the hospitality of all the others.

I remember my orderly once coming to me in a state of some dismay. It appeared that he was in trouble, so I questioned him. He explained that he thought his health was bad. He couldn't account for it. He used to be able to take his lager all right, but now, if he had four or five gallons, it seemed to make him queer.

As an illustration of the utter stupidity of the Polish recruit I may give the following incident

which took place at manœuvres. It illustrates not only Polish stupidity, but the unthinking obedience into which the German soldier is trained. The man was a recruit, but he was placed on sentry-go at a bridge. None were to cross the bridge without answering the challenge satisfactorily. Enter a sergeant of the opposing force. He was challenged, and had not the word. Therefore he could not cross. "Very well," thought the sergeant. He walked a few yards along the river bank, and waded up to his arms through the somewhat shallow stream, and was allowed to reach the other side without challenge. Instructions had been followed: no one had crossed the bridge. Things of that sort happened at Liège. Things of that sort will happen again.

## CONCLUSION

THOSE who have read my preceding pages, and have followed the course of the war, can, I imagine, come to but one conclusion: Prussianism must go!

The conduct of the War by our enemies has not surprised me. I was prepared for it, for I knew my German people and my German Army. The British Army is a small segment of our national life, a thing apart, having no common ground with the mass of the people. But the German Army is the German people, and the state of the Army is the state of the people. Evils in the one are reflected in the other, and whatever the training and the spirit of the Army may be, they fill in due time every cranny of the national outlook.

A great injustice has for many years been done to Spain, in that the Spaniard has been regarded universally as the most cruel of men. But he must retire from that unenviable notoriety now to make room for the Prussian butcher. Even allowing for the stress and strain of warfare, and the lust of battle that fires a man's blood at such times, and leads

him to commit atrocities that he would never conceive at other times, the Prussians have always gone beyond all limits. Everybody knows that soldiers of all nations, in the excitement of victory, allow themselves to be carried away in the frenzy of the moment, and do more or less deplorable things. But the modern Huns have made a philosophy and cult of these outrages. Their excesses were not the excesses of war. They were largely temperamental, and largely designed by cold precept. We have seen how the soldier is made familiar from his earliest years with the conquering effects of brutality; and now we have soldiers riding around in armed Red Cross vans, bombarding undefended towns, shooting civilians, torturing and giving themselves, not madly, but quietly and deliberately, to bestialities which never can appear in print. We have, too, the aged Count Zeppelin, hailed by his Emperor as the greatest man of his Empire and his time, infused with the same spirit, and commanding one of his own devilish machines for the purpose of dropping bombs on village streets and architectural beauties.

To this they were urged by the speeches of their Imperial master and the Chancellor, on the evening on which war was declared. Every phrase of those speeches is tinged with the lust of battle and destruction. Said the Kaiser:—

"A dark day has to-day broken over Germany. Envious persons are everywhere compelling us to defence. The sword is being forced into our hand. I hope that, if at the last hour my efforts to bring our adversaries to see things in their proper light and to maintain peace do not succeed, we shall, with God's help, wield the sword in such a way that we can again sheath it with honour.

"A war would require enormous sacrifices of blood and property from the German people, but we would show our adversaries what it means to attack Germany, and I now commend you to God. Go to church. Kneel down before God, and ask him for help for our brave army."

And his Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, echoed him:—

"At this serious hour, to give expression to the feelings of your Fatherland, you have come to the house of Bismarck, who with the Emperor William I and Field-Marshal von Moltke, welded the German Empire together. We wish to go on living in peace in the empire that we have developed in forty-four years of peaceful labour.

"The whole work of the Emperor has been

devoted to the maintenance of peace. To the last hour he has worked for the peace of Europe; he is still working for it. Should all his efforts prove vain, should the sword be forced into our hands, we shall take the field with a clear conscience and the knowledge that we did not seek war. We shall then wage war for our existence and for our national honour to the last drop of our blood.

"In the gravity of this hour I remind you of the words of Prince Friedrich Karl to the men of Brandenburg: 'Let your hearts beat to God, your fists on the enemy.' "

And they did "show their adversaries what it means to attack Germany!" How different the Imperial exhortation, when the troops were departing, to "spare none in your path!" from the splendid exhortation which Earl Kitchener sent to the British troops on their departure!

The effects of the military training are thus seen in full flower. It is with nations, as with individuals: any given obsession will, in time, take entire control of their movements, their thought, their every act. Brutality, Conquest, and Destruction have obsessed the War Lord and his officials for many years now; and thence it has permeated the

whole army and the national philosophy. It was started by the brilliant blood-and-iron Bismarck. It was developed by the puny maniac, Nietzsche, whose bit of phrase-making about "blond beasts" has had results which would probably have frightened that funny little man into a fit, if he had witnessed them. Without high aspirations, men and nations are doomed to ultimate destruction. We have seen how high are the aspirations of Germany in her recent conduct. Poets, musicians, and philosophers she has produced in plenty, but they do not mould or interpret the national spirit. That is distilled from the brutal-browed professors of Berlin, and from the glorification of the soldier over the civilian which is emphasised every moment of the day in some direction or another, and interpreted by stout, blond gentlemen with journalists' pens in their hands and Hessian boots on their feet.

Germany is a nation without a vision; and the following words, from a sermon of one of our greatest bishops, are rather apt at the moment, though written many, many years ago:

> "'Where there is no vision' the soul of a people cannot rise beyond the sphere of outward things—unlimited acquisition of power, continual accessions of prestige, new and increasing markets

—in short, 'the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.' But the most lavish satisfaction of mundane desire cannot compensate for the 'leanness of soul,' which is the nemesis of low aspirations, whether gratified or denied. If we have no mind above 'quails,' we shall very likely get our quails, but we shall also pay for them. And to pay for temporals by loss in spirituals, and not even to notice this incalculable loss in making up accounts, is to take the road to ruin, which can only appear to be the way of life 'where there is no vision.'"

Yes, Prussianism must go, and with it that gorgeous monster, the German Army. I cannot say that I shall not view its passing without a twinge of regret; for, having been even a tiny part of that machine, I shall feel that part of myself is going too. And there is something infinitely saddening in the death of a monster, even a blood-thirsty monster.

This monster is so enormous that the mind can hardly conceive it as a whole. None but a German mind, cold, ordered, clear, and pitiless, could have planned it, built it, and have kept a firm grasp on every hair-spring and lever of it.

When I broke away from it, I did so with some

little regret, tempered, however, by the gratification of knowing that I was once more free to fight for my own country in South Africa. One could never be tired of examining and analysing its wonderful processes. Always some new phase would present itself, some fresh marvel of ingenuity in construction and application; some trivial point that a thousand other men, of equal skill and foresight, would have overlooked, would reveal itself as covered, in all its possibilities, in many deft and delicate ways. The only point that was not perfectly planned was, as I have said, the greatest of all: Transport.

Disagreeable as much of the life was, to me it was still full of interest, and the study of the Army and its methods was a constant source of wonder and joy. For I am, first and last, a soldier, and the true soldier is interested in everything that pertains to his craft. You will often, in battle, hear the men of one side give, involuntarily, little cries and gasps of amazement or applause at some great piece of gunnery by the enemy, or some splendidly executed movement. The patriotism of the soldier is a curious thing; it is hardly the patriotism of the citizen: no deep longing to die for his country: no nonsense about great issues. Rather, it is a purely technical interest. The soldier is not concerned

with defending the sacred cause of freedom against its oppressors. The psychology of the situation is a fierce desire to outshine the enemy in technical skill; and you will often hear a gunner curse and gnash his teeth if a shot falls short. He feels that he is not fit to be a gunner and to have charge of that pretty little arrangement which he is so careful to keep spruce and trim. He does not feel that he has failed in his duty to his country. Put into words he feels: "Dash it, I'm not fit to be a gunner. I ought to be a gardener. Those blighters get the range every time in five seconds. What's the matter with us, boys? Have we all gone potty?"

I heard many expressions such as that in the Boer War. I once saw a gunner dance with vexation, and come very near to tears, at the bad sighting of his gun, and indulge in murmurs of admiration, such as "Lord! Beautiful gunnery, beautiful!" when a hail of shells came whistling over his head. The patriotism of the soldier is, in a word, just the sheer joy of the craftsman.

Returning to Prussianism, I think that its passing will be the best event that has yet happened to the German peoples. Left to themselves, they are agreeable folk, as all English visitors know; and the soldiers are good fellows, full of fight, and keen. It is the pernicious philosophy back of the Army that

has made it the most detested thing in the world today. Officials have talked largely about patriotism being the basis of all education in the Empire, and how love of country and country's expansion must be instilled into the mind of the child from its first receptive moment; yet, when the young citizen joins for his service, he is treated as though he were a thing of the least account in the country. He is simply a Something which must be turned and knocked into shape and polished ready to fit into his corner of the machine. The English private often considers that he has grievances, but they are as nothing to those of his German cousin.

The German is not assumed to have any personality or any feelings of dignity. All his life he is overborne; and the sporting spirit which is perhaps the most outstanding feature of the British ranks has never yet entered into his military life. In England we have an expression: "Officer and gentleman," to distinguish commissioned officers from non-commissioned. Only commissioned officers are entitled to a salute from their subordinates. In Germany, however, the private has to salute all his officers, non-coms. included, and must stand to attention when addressing any one of them. In England, the salute is intended to mark the fact that the officer is acknowledged to belong to the class whose

hereditary function it is to command. In Germany, it is simply demanded from the private so that he may realise how very inferior is his station.

No army can exist without individualisation. Each man must know for what and against whom he is fighting. At present the patriotic teaching which the young German receives is but the very crudest Jingoism, and this is forced down his throat without his being in the least able to digest it. Numbers of men, in the present war, have been fighting without having the least idea what they were fighting for, or even whom they were fighting, or how the war started. It was the same in the war of the 'seventies. While in the German Army I met a man who had been through this campaign, and asked him for a few recollections, little experiences, and so forth. What had he done in the war? Where did he fight? Was he present at this or that action?

"Ah," he replied. "The war—yes. We go to fight; I do not know whom we fight or where we go. But we march and march, and then we camp. And every morning I shave the colonel!"

That was all he knew!

How different is the Japanese method of instilling the spirit of patriotism into the child. There he is taught not that the Japanese can blow the world to pieces, and that no other peoples are one-tenth

as fine and brave. He is taught that his land is a beautiful land; that it must be held sacred from violation by the enemy; that his fathers were strong and noble and resolute, and that he must be like them; that, if the enemy attack him, he must know that if he lays down his life, he will be doing a sweet and beautiful thing. In the one case, patriotism is purely materialist. In Japan, it is the highest of all ideals.

Prussian patriotism is sheer insolence, and because of this it has never commanded the respect of any civilised people.

The children are stuffed with this sort of thing, and, in a recent article, an English teacher told how German boys would stand on the French frontier, and see how far they could spit into France. All schools are smothered with gory pictures of the Franco-Prussian war, portraits of Bismarck and von Moltke, and the Kaiser in one or other of his innumerable quick changes. The whole teaching is of the coming war, particularly the bloodthirsty side of it.

Even the German school-books are full of the same kind of Chauvinist stuff; passages laughing at England in her attempt to be a world-power without national service; other passages about Germany's complete mastery of the world as soon as the great

war arrives; and particularly are they rich in stories, anecdotes, and essays regarding the French, the weak and cowardly French, who would never dare to attack Germany without allies to support her.

The following verse, from a school anthology of songs, read in the light of recent events, has a certain ironical twist for us. It is a song "In praise of the Kaiser Wilhelm II":—

> Thou yearnest not for battle-glory,
> But rather for the Palm of Peace;
> 'Tis Peace thine aim and thy reward.
> But rights and honour of thy land
> Thou guardest with thy weapon'd arm.
> Thou hurlest lightning from thine eye,
> And woe betide o'erweening ones,
> Should them thy fiery eagle tear.

If Germany is crushed, as we hope she will be, her sons will probably continue fighting until the last of them has fallen. But after that there will probably arise a new generation which will free itself from the yoke that has so long pressed upon the people. Militarism is the enemy of all social progress, of culture, of the fine arts, and of all those qualities which make men. Too long has this Empire been guided in its ways by a group of men who are of that rare type: brilliantly intellectual and—evil.

Gladly, I think, the people will throw off the burden of service, and turn themselves to that nobler, cleaner patriotism of social development. They will see that aspirations for peace are not as poisonous as their philosophers have held. They will see that while war may be a regrettable necessity, the constant strain and drain on the youth of the nation, and the resultant harshness of national life from a militarism which has found its way into every petty department, are not necessities. They will awake to learn that war *is* a curse, and is not, and never can be, the greatest factor in the furtherance of culture and of power. They will learn that Might is not Right.

This German Army which, in the present struggle, seems doomed to go down, is a glorious army; of that there can be no two opinions. But, in the future, I look to see a still finer army, an army which is not entirely a machine, but a force composed of patriots, a force which will work together as harmoniously as a machine, but also as spontaneously as a living thing; a force in which good-fellowship will take the place of overlordship, each man knowing his duty and doing it for love of doing it, each man knowing that he is of value to his fellows and his country's progress, each knowing

that he is not merely some mechanical contraption that can shoot, but—a man.

That Army will be the Army of the Republic of the United States of Germany.

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